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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 438. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 22ND, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

"Experience the Best Teacher."

(Advice to a Friend.)

WHEN you lie awake and fretting
At those love-sick cats duetting
Through the livelong night—
Head and hands with fever burning,
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They will certain rest assure you
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"BEECHAM'S PILLS" with magic power
Sleep on sleepless eyelids shower
Through the livelong night!
"BEECHAM'S PILLS"—where Duke reposes,
Or where humble crofter dozes,
Make their bed a bed of roses
Through the livelong night.

"BEECHAM'S PILLS," like fairy maiden
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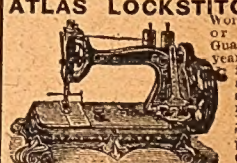

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No. 438.] For the Week ending May 22nd, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

THE BURGLAR NEXT DOOR.

I DO not love my neighbour as myself. Although in the habit, as a rule, of conducting my life according to Christian precept, I find this command impossible to carry out—except in theory.

My neighbour is a wrong-headed and prejudiced person, whose ideas on politics and other matters differ entirely from my own. Furthermore, he is constantly making himself disagreeable about small things, for instance, the fence between our gardens, which he declares I cause to be repaired with unnecessary frequency.

Again, in spite of my known dislike of noise, he insists on encouraging the organ-grinder to play for hours at a time before his dwelling. Besides all this, he overlooks my house to such an extent that I am obliged to keep the blinds of my staircase window constantly closed. This very materially interferes with my comfort, as it excludes a large quantity of light and air, which, by rights, should be mine.

In spite of all these just causes of complaint, however, I would not allow any harm to come to my neighbour that I could prevent. At least, I felt so until a short time ago. I think differently now. I have had a lesson I shall never forget, and if ever I put myself to any trouble again to save him from disaster, I am not the highly intelligent man I know myself to be. It came about in this way.

Once every year my neighbour takes his entire family away for a holiday. His house remains untenanted for a month—a blessed month for me. I spend it revelling in an extra quantity of air and light and a blissful cessation of grind-organ thrills and chords. It is not surprising, therefore, that I long for this happy period to arrive as ardently as do my neighbour's children, who are apt to discuss the event for days beforehand in shrill voices most trying to the cultivated ear.

Judge of my delight, therefore, when early the other morning, having been attracted to the window by the noise of wheels, I beheld an omnibus draw up before my neighbour's house. The annual departure was about to take place. Into this vehicle I saw my neighbour, with the patient and resigned air of a family man, hand his wife, three excited children, one bawling baby, six bandboxes, an Irish nurse, and a puppy. He then entered himself, and the whole party drove off.

They say to watch people out of sight brings them bad luck. I had not time, in any case, to do this. Hastily waving my hand in the direction of the omnibus as it rolled away, I rushed to the staircase window, threw open the blinds with a vehemence that upset a pet geranium of Emilia's that stood upon the window-seat, and admitted a flood of glorious sunshine into my dwelling.

I had another exquisite pleasure a little later in the day, when the piano organ man took up his usual station beneath my neighbour's windows. I allowed him to play for about an hour, then sent out my servant to say the gentleman who lived in No. 57 was out of town, and that if he, the organ-grinder, showed himself in the neighbourhood again for upwards of a month, I would send for the police and have him arrested as a public nuisance. I knew I would have no right to do anything of the kind, but counted on the man's not knowing enough to be aware of this. It proved to be the case. He moved off with astonishing celerity. Ignorance—in other persons—is, indeed, frequently productive of bliss.

It happened that three days after this, Fate, which is for ever meddling in our affairs (domestic or otherwise), ordained that I should have a little disagreement with Emilia, which materially assisted in bringing about the unpleasant events which followed. Emilia is my wife. She has a pretty face, and a mind of average calibre, which has become greatly strengthened since our marriage by constant intercourse with a superior one.

Emilia, who allows herself to be very behind-hand in keeping up with the literature of the day, had been reading Mr. Bodkin's account of the adventures of Alfred Juggins in *Pearson's Weekly* for the first time.

She was quite charmed with them, and began talking with a great deal of enthusiasm about the detective and his marvellous powers. I, who make it a rule to keep up with the times in the literary world as well as in everything else, had, of course, read the stories.

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I had been much interested in Alfred Juggins myself at the time, but when Emilia went wild about him in this extravagant way, I discovered I did not think so much of his powers after all. Emilia is frequently of assistance to me in this manner in the forming of my opinions.

I now pointed out to her that Mr. Alfred Juggins's doings were really not at all out of the ordinary. He did no more than any man of intelligence could have done equally well. Given the same premises, any person of even an ordinary amount of mind could have reached the same conclusions.

"I don't know about that," said Emilia.

"I assure you it is a fact," replied I.

"I'd like to have you prove it to me," said she.

"I have no doubt I could easily do so," I responded.

"Well then," said Emilia pugnaciously, "if you think yourself equal to Alfred Juggins, look at me and tell me what I've been doing all the morning? That would have been a trifle to him."

"Nonsense!" said I, "that's no way to argue. Like all women, you are totally unable to stick to the point."

"You can't do it," remarked Emilia triumphantly. "You are as incapable of observation as he was the reverse. Now, look at me well. My hair is ruffled, there are scraps of lace and silk adhering to my dress, and even an atom of straw, and my face wore a pleasant expression until you made me cross. Why, Alfred Juggins would have known in a minute that I'd been trimming a bonnet."

"Confound Alfred Juggins!" said I, abruptly terminating the conversation, which bored me.

It was the night after this that, with the intention of retiring to bed, I put out the light in the hall below and started up the staircase. I generally sit up late, and it was after one o'clock. Emilia had bidden me good-night some hours before, and the house was quiet from top to bottom. Halfway up the steps I paused, attracted by the brilliancy of the moon, which shone directly through the staircase window, the blinds of which I had so triumphantly fastened open on the day of my neighbour's departure. It gave me pleasure to recall the delights of that moment, and I leant out and gazed upon my neighbour's belongings with keen satisfaction.

All was still.

The old servant, who had been left in charge of the house, slept in the detached kitchen building at the rear—a half-deaf old creature whom I knew well by sight, as he frequently causes me intense annoyance by beguiling my coachman into gossiping with him over the garden wall, and thus wasting his time—which belongs to me.

I remained at the window for some time, for I became interested in observing the state of my neighbour's premises. The moon shone so brightly that I could see with great clearness the badly kept state of his back-yard and garden. Weeds running riot over everything, the garden gate off its hinges, the bricks, which should have marked the sides of the path, uprooted and scattered. Altogether, a most disgraceful condition of things.

I mentally compared it with my own well-kept grounds, and thought how true it was that the superiority of a highly intelligent man shows itself in all his belongings.

I had seated myself on the window-sill and was beginning to feel sure I was right in thinking I saw a broken pane of glass in one of the attic windows, when my attention was attracted by a slight noise in the direction of the street. It sounded like a person gently fumbling with a bunch of keys, or jingling instruments of some kind. All grew quiet again, and then, to my amazement, I saw a head slowly rising above the wall which separates my neighbour's front garden from the street.

Then a leg was put slowly and cautiously over, and in a moment the owner of these two articles stood safely on the ground. I leant forward, keeping carefully in the shadow, and watched for further proceedings.

The man looked all about him, then walked softly towards the house, and appeared to be measuring with his eye the height of the balcony. Apparently he was satisfied with his observations, for, mounting upon the lower railing, he embraced one of the posts and quickly clambered up to the second storey.

I considered what I should do. Here was clearly an individual who had nefarious designs upon my neighbour's property. It was my duty, as a man and a fellow citizen, to prevent the carrying out of his villainous schemes. My first impulse was to give the alarm and attract the attention of the police, and I was on the point of putting this idea into execution, when the memory of that little conversation with Emilia, which I have already repeated, flashed into my mind. Here was an excellent chance to confute her, utterly and entirely—a grand opportunity. I would secure this person myself without calling upon the aid of the law, and thus prove that I was as fully capable of tracking and skilfully overthrowing the designs of the wicked as any detective of them all, Alfred Juggins into the bargain. I therefore remained motionless, and observed with an eagle eye the movements of the burglar.

He walked slowly along the upper balcony until he reached a window opening into a back room. The sash of this he noiselessly threw up and then lightly vaulted into the room, and in the intense stillness of the night, I could hear him gently stepping across the floor.

I decided to allow him time to become a little confident before I acted, in hopes that I would be able to take him by surprise. I calculated that he must be aware of the empty condition of the house, and would, therefore, fancy himself secure and take his time in the selection of his spoils. I was strengthened in this belief by the fact of his lighting the gas in the room he had entered, turning it very low, and closing the shutters immediately after to prevent the light being seen from without.

I thought the time had now arrived for making my own preparations. I must first arm myself, and then get out of one of my own downstairs windows into my neighbour's garden. When there, my further proceedings must depend on circumstances. I should either follow him into the house or be ready to confront him on his exit with a loaded pistol. I preferred the latter plan, as I am not the sort of person to enjoy climbing up a balcony-post.

First and foremost, I must procure my pistol. I ascended the stairs on tiptoe, hoping not to arouse Emilia. She must know nothing till the feat was actually accomplished, and I could overwhelm her with the evidence of my *coup d'état*.

I was reflecting whether I should march my prisoner at the pistol's point into my own bathroom for the night or hand him over to the police immediately, when I discovered to my dismay, that Emilia was sitting up and reading a paper. I recognised it at once. It was *Pearson's Weekly*. She was again absorbed in the doings of Alfred Juggins. I hoped she was too interested to notice what I was after, but unfortunately she looked up as I was lifting down my pistol from the shelf where I kept it.

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"What is the matter?" she cried in an alarmed tone.

"Nothing," I replied shortly. "Go on with your paper."

"What are you going to do with that?" she asked obstinately.

"My dear child, you are very curious," I replied warily, knowing Emilia's capabilities for making a scene. "However, if you must know, I am taking it to—to oil it."

I moved towards the door and had my hand on the latch, when Emilia called out timidly: "William."

"What?" said I sharply.

"You—you are not thinking of committing suicide, are you?"

This was too much. "Emilia," said I. "Your amount of childish folly really amazes me. *Am* I the sort of man to commit suicide?"

Emilia confessed that I was not.

"Then, for goodness' sake," said I, "leave me alone," and I left the room. As Emilia was quite capable of following me if the fancy seized her, and that would spoil all, I took the precaution of gently turning the key in the lock as I passed out.

I made my way softly downstairs again, and, with as little noise as possible, climbed through the pantry window into my neighbour's garden. The burglar was evidently hard at work, for I could hear muffled sounds from behind the closed blinds.

"Go ahead, my friend," I remarked satirically under my breath. "Enjoy yourself while you can. The day of reckoning is at hand."

Presently the noises ceased, and all grew still. I sat down beneath an unsteady arbour of honeysuckle vines which commanded the balcony and waited patiently. The fellow must be making up quite a goodly bundle, I thought, as two o'clock chimed from the clock in the church tower down the street. I waited fifteen minutes longer and began to grow impatient. I wondered if the burglar could possibly have seen me and made his escape from the other side of the house. The very idea made me angry, and I decided to lose no more time, but investigate the matter at once.

I therefore put my pistol in my breast-pocket and resolutely approached the balcony-railing, which I mounted. I chose the same post that the burglar had used, supposing he had probably made a good selection, and grasping it in my arms I began to climb. My principal feeling, as I made my way scrambling and slipping towards the upper railing, was extreme thankfulness that Emilia could not see me at the moment. A final effort and I thankfully felt solid planks beneath my feet once once.

Advancing to the window through which the burglar had made his entrance, I found that the shutters were unbolted and that I could open them with ease. I did so, and cautiously peered into the room beyond. It was in darkness, except for the moonlight, but by the help of this I could see tolerably distinctly. The room to all appearances was empty. The burglar, after completing his search here, must long ago have penetrated further into the house.

I carefully got in through the window and advanced into the room. I was about to leave it by the door into the hall, which was slightly ajar, when, happening to cast my eyes in the direction of the bed, I paused, scarcely able to suppress an ejaculation of surprise. Lying back amongst the pillows the outline of a man was distinctly visible in the moonlight, and even as I looked a slight snore broke the silence.

My blood boiled with indignation at the calm impertinence of the thing. The villain, after finishing his rascally work, must have been attracted by the comfortable appearance of the bed, and, with cool audacity, have decided to give himself a little rest after his labours.

"I have you now, my friend," I thought, and without pausing for further reflection I sprang upon the sleeper, and, in spite of his resistance, for he awoke immediately and began to struggle desperately, I gagged him with my pocket handerchief and got his hands and feet tied together with a skipping rope, which one of my small neighbours, under the direction of Providence, I supposed at the time, had left in a conspicuous position on the floor. Then, not waiting in my elation for a second glance at the creature, I flew through the window, skimmed rapidly and unpleasantly down the post, and precipitated myself through the pantry window into my own dwelling.

Triumphantly I rushed upstairs, and noiselessly unlocking the door of the room where I had left Emilia, (I had never felt quite sure as to whether she was ever aware of her imprisonment on that occasion or not), I favoured her with victorious mien. She dropped her book and gave a little scream as I appeared. It is a curious fact that reading about murders at midnight is sufficient to upset a woman's nerves.

"Emilia," said I, "I was obliged to deceive you a short time ago for your own good. I needed that pistol for a desperate purpose. Don't be alarmed. You see me safe before your eyes; but for the last two hours I have been on the trail of a bloodthirsty ruffian who entered the house next door, with, who knows, what horrible intentions. Thank goodness, alone and unaided I have succeeded in capturing the villain. I have now only to put him in the hands of the law, where he will meet with the fate that he so richly deserves."

I then proceeded to give her a clear account of the whole adventure, being particularly impressive on the subject of the dangers I had gone through and the sagacity I had displayed.

Emilia listened with visible interest from the first, but as I went on she displayed an attention which caused her to sit upright and immovable in her chair. When I had finished she remained in the same position for a moment, and then, sinking back against the cushions, she said slowly: "William, do you know what you have done? You have committed an assault upon—you have tied and gagged in his own house—your neighbour!"

"What?" cried I, scarcely taking in what she meant.

"You don't know what you are talking about. My neighbour went off to the country a week ago with his family."

"He came back without them this morning," said Emilia. "I saw him arrive."

The full horror of the situation began to force itself upon me.

"You saw him arrive?" I repeated helplessly.

Emilia nodded her head emphatically.

"And why didn't you mention the fact?" said I furiously.

"I never dreamt you'd take an interest in it," replied Emilia warmly. "You certainly couldn't expect me to imagine the possibility of any such utterly absurd occurrence as this. Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! It's too ridiculous!—it's perfectly killing! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! You've broken into another man's house and gagged him and tied him up with, who knows, what horrible intentions. Oh! Oh! If I don't stop laughing, I shall die. Oh!"

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Emilia buried her face in her hands and giggled and screamed with laughter in a most underbred manner. It was not nice of her, considering that she was the cause of the whole disgusting adventure. I told her so, but she only laughed the more, and I heard her murmuring something about bloodthirsty ruffian and the hands of the law. It irritated me.

"But, Emilia," said I, "if this is true, why should he have entered his house in such a very unusual manner? You must be mistaken." I grew bolder as I reflected on the highly suspicious entrance the gagged gentleman had made.

"Why, he must have lost his latch-key, of course," said Emilia, still laughing absurdly, "or left it in another pocket or put it on his other bunch. The poor thing's wife is away, you know. And if a man hasn't the right to enter his own house through the windows, if he wishes, this isn't the land of liberty it's supposed to be. Oh! if I had only seen you scrambling up that post. Oh, dear! Oh dear!"

"Emilia," said I, "please be serious. It is childish in the extreme to give way to laughter in that uncontrolled manner. You don't realize how desperate the case is. He'll work off that gag in a few minutes and begin calling for help. The neighbourhood will be alarmed, and the whole thing will get out. I shall be a laughing-stock for the entire population."

I had hardly done speaking when a most unearthly yell echoed through the air.

"You hear," said I, getting up and rushing wildly up and down the room. "It's only a question of time I tell you. It's only a question of time!"

The screams continued, each one more ear-piercing than the last.

"Had I better rush over and pretend to know nothing about it?" I asked in an agony.

"Oh, no, no!" said Emilia, with a giggle. "You ought to see your clothes. Post-climbing doesn't agree with them. They'd give you away utterly. Wait a moment, and see what happens."

I was forced to take her advice. For a few minutes the screaming was kept up, then came an interval of silence, and then we heard an angry voice vituperating in excessively strong language, and a thinner, weaker one in tones of surprise and interrogation. The old servant had apparently come to the rescue.

I had a moment of intense relief. The neighbourhood was quiet. No one gave signs of having been disturbed. Perhaps I should never be suspected. It was more than probable, that in that moment of wild struggling, my neighbour had not recognised me any more than I him. Oh, blessed thought! followed by fresh agony.

"Emilia," I cried, "my handkerchief! I used it for a gag. Oh! I am done for! I am lost! My name will be discovered, and everything will get out."

Emilia considered. "If it's one of your new ones," she said, "I forgot to have them marked."

I refrained from rebuking Emilia for having neglected a domestic duty.

I passed a miserable and unpleasant night. I could not sleep, for my mind kept constantly recurring to the angry tones of my neighbour's voice. My spirits sank as I thought of the footprints leading to my pantry window.

I felt thankful duelling had gone out of fashion. I would not like Emilia to be left a widow. I went down to breakfast in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. I could not give my attention to the morning paper, and the muffins seemed to have lost their flavour.

A door slamming made me jump, and the tinkle of the door bell caused me perfect agony. Emilia was calm, cool, and collected. I reflected on the cold-bloodedness of women where they themselves are not personally concerned.

As we were finishing breakfast (Emilia showed a remarkably good appetite and ate most heartily—and heartlessly), the dreaded moment came. The servant, after answering a loud peal at the bell, returned with a card, and remarked that the gentleman who lived next door would like to see me for a moment. I went through a second of agony, such as I hope never to experience again.

"Shall—shall I say I'm not at home?" I was foolish enough to ask Emilia.

She smiled provokingly. "Certainly not," she answered. "Show the gentleman in, Thomas, and bring in some hot muffins."

"One moment, Thomas," said I, "is—is the gentleman alone?"

"Quite soliterry, sir," answered Thomas reassuringly.

"Put a bold face on the matter," said Emilia, when Thomas had left the room. "Look as if you knew nothing about the matter, and be very much surprised at everything he says."

Her eyes twinkled, and even at that moment I could not refrain from reflecting on the natural hypocrisy of women. Thank goodness, deceit is not so easy to a man!

The door opened and the gentleman from next door entered the room. I realized that he was at least three inches taller than I had supposed him to be.

"This is, indeed, a pleasure," said Emilia, holding out her hand and smiling brightly. "Please sit down and let me give you a cup of tea. Thomas, the muffins!"

My neighbour shook hands with me, accepted a chair and smiled at my wife People are apt to smile at Emilia. I don't know why.

"I must apologise," said my neighbour, "for this early intrusion. I am aware that there is nothing that needs apology more than this untimely invasion of other people's houses."

He casually glanced at me; my sensations were unpleasant.

"But I have come to confer with you, Mr. Willoughby, on a most unpleasant topic, which, I may remark, concerns us both deeply."

Cold chills permeated my entire being, but I forced myself to appear polite.

"Sir!" continued my neighbour with vehemence. "Last night as I lay on my bed asleep, in an empty house, for my family are at present away from home, my dwelling was entered by a murderous rascal who half throttled me before I awoke. In spite of my desperate resistance, he gagged me and tied me hand and foot. I have no doubt he intended to despoil the entire house, but, fortunately for me, he must have heard some sound that frightened him, for he had no sooner taken his hands from me than he disappeared like a whirlwind through the window and escaped by the balcony posts."

"You don't say so!" cried Emilia sympathetically. "The action of a villain, indeed, was it not William?"

"The rascality of the deed amazes me!" I replied brokenly, feeling Emilia's eye upon me.

"You may truly say so," continued my neighbour. "It is a nice state of things, certainly, when a peaceful householder is liable to be attacked and murdered in his own bed. By Jove! if I could get the scoundrel by the neck, I'd soon show him which was the better man

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standing. The cowardly villain! to spring upon me in my sleep!"

"Cowardly, indeed!" said Emilia warmly. "What sort of looking man was he?"

"I haven't a very good idea," replied my neighbour. "I only know he was a tall man, say of about your husband's height," casting his eye critically at me as he spoke. "He had a most murderous and malicious appearance—as thorough-paced a rogue as I ever saw."

I heard a slight titter from Emilia.

"I should say, too, from his dexterity," continued my neighbour, "that he was very much in the habit of climbing about balconies. I came over to put you on your guard. The garden is trampled over with footsteps, and some of these lead directly to one of your windows." (I quaked.) "This has led me to imagine that he must have intended breaking into your house also, but finding the window too strongly bolted, abandoned the attempt."

Thrice blessed moment! I could scarcely keep my countenance from becoming wreathed in smiles on hearing this charming supposition. I was safe! I even waved my hand to Emilia when my neighbour was looking the other way.

"The question now is what steps we are to take in the matter?" observed my neighbour. "Had I better put the case in the hands of a detective?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried I. "You have no idea how very unpleasant it would be."

"I think so myself," replied my neighbour.

"Much better leave the matter alone," I continued urgently. "Nothing was stolen, and it really doesn't matter in the least who did it. It was only a trifle anyhow."

"Trifle? Do you call it a trifle?" cried my neighbour indignantly. "It's a pretty trifle, to be sure, when a man is half murdered in his sleep. Trifle? It's anything but a trifle, I assure you."

"Of course," said I hurriedly. "I wasn't thinking of what I said."

"However," said my neighbour, "I suppose there's no use taking any steps in the matter. There's really very little to go on. I don't suppose I'd ever find the man," he ended disappointedly.

"No, not the slightest chance," said I delightedly. "Let us consider the incident as ended. A fine day, isn't it?"

"Well, I'll say good-bye," said my neighbour dejectedly. "If you are really of that opinion I suppose you are right, but I should like another chance at the fellow."

My neighbour rose. So did my spirits.

"Wait a moment," said Emilia. "I have something to suggest. I think decidedly something ought to be done in the matter."

I looked at Emilia in surprise. She had the mischievous twinkle in her eye with which she so frequently exasperates me.

"I have been thinking about the matter," she said, "and I believe that if that burglar ever comes back at all, it will be to-night."

"To-night?" said my neighbour.

"Yes," said Emilia. "It is the most unlikely thing in the world that such an attempt should be repeated the very night after its failure. A burglar would run an awful risk, if he should try it. Therefore, you don't think it necessary to take any precautions, because you are perfectly sure he wouldn't dare to attempt it. Now the burglar knows all this perfectly well, therefore, this is exactly the night he is going to choose to try the thing again, because he knows the chances are you'll be taken unawares."

"There is certainly something in what you say, Mrs. Willoughby," said my neighbour. "Now I think of it, I see you are quite right."

"Now, what I should advise," continued Emilia, "is that you and Mr. Willoughby should sit up to-night over at your house and be ready for the man when he comes. Sitting in a dark room, you will find it easy to spring upon him as he enters and secure him."

"An excellent scheme, Mrs. Willoughby," said my neighbour, visibly brightening. "Allow me to congratulate you on your judgment."

"Oh! that is nothing. I have been reading some detective stories recently," said Emilia modestly.

I looked gloomily and disapprovingly at Emilia. She is entirely too fond of a joke. I have never been able to see any amusement in things of the sort.

"Then I may count on you for to-night, Mr. Willoughby?" said my neighbour.

"Of course," said Emilia quickly. "There is nothing Mr. Willoughby enjoys more than a midnight adventure—is there, William?"

I tried my best to get out of it, but Emilia, who was completely off her head, gave me no chance to say a word. She settled the whole matter, and before I knew where I was, I was engaged to sit up all night in the company of my detestable neighbour. That is Emilia's idea of a joke!

"Well, I'll expect you at eleven," said my neighbour, and he took his leave.

While I went with him to the door, Emilia took the opportunity of putting on her hat and leaving the house through the back gate. It was an intelligent thing to do.

Such an abominable night I hope never to pass again. I shall always remember it against Emilia. Seated in the dark and obliged to listen to my neighbour's prosy talk, not even able to fall asleep in my chair, because of his numerous questions; I very nearly acknowledged to myself that Emilia had got the best of it.

At twelve o'clock Emilia sent over a tray with some coffee; also a pistol, the carving knife, and a pair of razors, with a message that she could not bear to think of my meeting the desperado insufficiently armed.

"How charmingly thoughtful of Mrs. Willoughby!" observed my neighbour. I said nothing, but added this to several other little things I have against Emilia.

At daybreak, worn and weary, my neighbour, in much disappointment at the failure of his hopes, released me, and I left his premises by the front door, which seemed an unnecessary lengthy way compared with the pantry window.

"Emilia," said I sternly, on reaching home, "you have had a good deal of amusement out of this affair. But I want you to understand one thing. You know me, I believe, to be a man of my word?"

Emilia assented, if silence means consent.

"Then mark my words!" I continued solemnly, "if you ever mention one of the events of the last two nights to a single living soul, I pack my bag and depart for Terra del Fuego at once."

Emilia promised silence, and I believe up to the present time has kept her word.

I have ceased attempting to strengthen her mind, however. She has intelligence enough already—for a woman!

LILLI HUGER SMITH.

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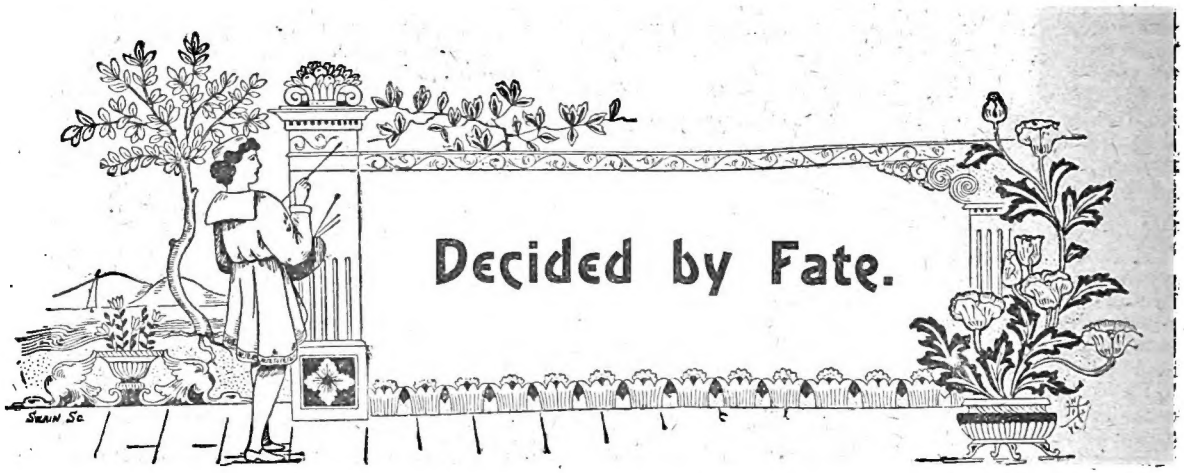

Fate was a cat and Leonard Herrick was a mouse. There had been some rare sport, but Herrick was of the opinion that it could not last much longer.

He had run this way and that way, and a thousand times he had fancied he was going to escape. But always the velvet paws, with the long, sharp claws springing out of them, had caught him just in time. So at last he lay still, panting, not knowing which way to turn.

He was in a big city all alone. The people who rushed by him were like the thoughts that whirled through his brain; they were shadows, and the everlasting train of them had no beginning or end.

He could not distinguish the real men and women whom he saw from those whom he merely remembered. Now and again there appeared in the throng the faces of the dead. He did not mind those, but there were others that he shrank from.

He stood with his back against the iron fence near St. Martin's Church. There was just light enough in the western sky to give the pile of stone a shadow, which fell upon hurrying thousands who did not notice it.

Herrick's hands were in his pockets. He jingled a few coins which meant that he could live several days longer if he cared to do so. As to a more extended future, he could not picture it. All the lines of his life seemed to end in a knot, which could by no means be untied, but must merely be dropped. He remembered that there were miracles, but he could not think of one to wish for.

He crossed Trafalgar Square and walked down Pall Mall, slowly and with hesitating steps, for he had no errand. A voice cried: "'Cab, sir!" almost in his ear. He turned and looked up at the man on the box.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that I still look like a gentleman?"

He felt towards the cabman as towards one who had given him a helping hand. Why not pay the debt? To do so would cost him only a day of his life. He had about a sovereign in his pocket.

"Yes," he said as he got into the cab; "Frascati's."

It was the first place that had come into his mind.

The cushioned seat and the comfortable support for his head were very refreshing. A fancy came to him that he would dine decently and then go to a theatre. The extravagance would be trifling, for it was really of small importance whether he starved to death on Sunday or the following Wednesday. He was in a mood to make a jest of it.

A strong glare from an electric light flooded the cab and made visible to him a package in brown paper, that looked as if it might be a sandwich. The object protruded from under the seat. He thought it must be the cabman's supper, which had been hidden in some small locker and had fallen upon the floor. The idea that the food should be spoiled was disagreeable to Herrick, and so he picked up the little brown bundle.

It was smaller than he had supposed, and it did not feel like bread. But had it been food and he at the last pang of starvation, the touch of it would not have sent such a thrill through all his frame.

He knew that the contents of that packet was money. It felt like a mass of notes folded, awkwardly wrapped up, and fastened with elastic bands. Through the brown covering Herrick could feel the crispness of the government paper. The amount might be a poor man's hard-earned savings or a rich man's profit on a great transaction.

As to his own conduct in the matter, Herrick had no doubt whatever. Fate had thrown this money into his hands and Fate might take it away, but not if he could hold on tightly enough. His fingers trembled as he picked at the elastic bands. Suddenly, and without his knowing why, the rubber strings vanished with a loud snap that startled him, and the package sprang open on his knees.

He bent forward, eagerly scanning the notes in his hands, and counted them feverishly. There were forty of them, and each was £100.

Throughout the latter part of the young man's misfortunes he had had substantially but one wish—to rest. Rest has many forms, suited to a vast variety of individual tastes. To Herrick in his day dreams it had always taken the form of travel without care. All paths lie open to a man who has £4,000, and there is no reason why care should sit behind him as he rides.

Herrick had only the most shadowy thought for the person who had lost this money. He did not even speculate upon the manner of its loss. It had passed into the control of one who needed it, and that was enough.

He placed the notes in his pockets in the best interests of comfort and safety. Then he folded up the brown

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paper and pocketed that also, with a dim consciousness that if it were left in the cab it might get the driver into trouble.

The fellow was honest, no doubt, and Herrick did not wish that he should suffer a wrong. He preferred to keep the wrapper himself, and take the risk of it until he could find some means of disposing of it that would be safer than throwing it out of the cab window.

How to leave the cab was a question that concerned him greatly. He did not wish to confront the driver again, for there might be an investigation, and the question of identification might arise, in which case it would be well to have the man know as little as possible of Herrick's personal appearance. He reflected with satisfaction that the place in Pall Mall where he had entered the cab had been rather dark.

He decided not to complete his journey. Thrusting half-a-crown through the trap-door he sprang out and disappeared in the crowd.

He walked back to a small hotel in a street off Pall Mall, ordered a meal, and ate it with a relish. It was enchanted food. It was the fare of an Atlantic liner, the delicacies of European hotels, and the fruits of the tropics.

He cared little for his bed. It would be no more than a place to lie and think of the future. It was many a night since he had really slept. Certainly, with so much upon his mind, he could not sleep this night, even if he should try.

So, when he had been shown to his room in the hotel, he piled his pillows against the headboard of the bed, and reclined against them, fully dressed. He was very happy. No question of right or wrong in what he had done, or what he expected to do, came to torment him. For a long time he had borne his life like a tremendous burden. This had suddenly slipped from his shoulders, leaving his natural powers benumbed.

The next morning he found himself in a Metropolitan train going citywards.

His pockets were bulging with money, but there was something in one of them that he could not remember to have put there. He pulled it out, and found it to be the brown paper wrapper that had contained the money. As he held it in his hand it was concealed by his newspaper. No fellow-passengers could see it, and it was doubly fortunate, because, in plain sight upon the paper, were the name and address:

"Herbert Graham, 57, Broad Street, E.C."

The train was just stopping at Mark Lane. That was the station nearest the steamship office. Thrusting the brown paper wrapper back in his pocket, he left the carriage, and went with the throng up the street.

He was thinking about the accommodations he would choose on the steamer. He continued to think of that and kindred subjects, yet he walked back towards the Bank. Presently he found himself asking a lift boy in a big building if he knew where Mr. Graham's office was.

Mr. Graham happened to be in his outer office when Herrick entered. He was pouring out a story into a grey-haired Exchange man, and Herrick heard a few words of it—something about cabs, and cash, and carelessness.

"I have found the money that you lost," said Herrick. "Here it is."

The banker sprang to his feet, clutching the notes in his fingers. "My dear fellow, tell me all about it."

"There's nothing to tell," replied the young man. "I merely found it in the cab."

Mr. Graham eyed him a moment in surprise.

"You take it coolly," he said.

"I couldn't take it at all," responded Herrick, with a feeble smile. "I don't know why. It was instinct, I suppose. My ancestors must have been honest men."

"Upon my word, you must take one of these notes," said the banker. "I've offered it in an ad., and——"

"I can't do it," said Herrick. "I don't feel it to be right."

"But, my dear boy," exclaimed the old man kindly, "I must do something for you. I want to; believe me. At least come back and take lunch with me. Shall we say one o'clock?"

"It will give me great pleasure," said Herrick; and, bowing, he turned away and walked out of the office.

He didn't keep his appointment, however. He spent his last shilling in prussic acid. Fate decided it.

EVERETT HOLBROOK.

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Short Stories

£50 IN 23 PRIZES. PICTURE PUZZLES. No. 3. Second Series.

1st PRIZE	Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE	A Ten-Pound Note.
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4th to 13th PRIZES	Ten Sovereigns.
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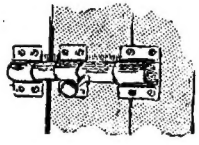
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a Peer of the Realm. The title alone is indicated, not the family name.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 21.....



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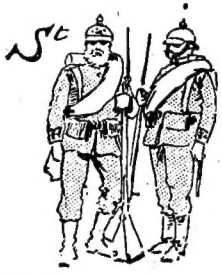

No. 25.....

No. 26.....

No. 27.....

No. 28.....

Remember these Things.

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

No. 29.....

No. 30.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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THE three great and memorable sieges of the Peninsular War are those of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and San Sebastian. The annals of battle record nowhere a more furious daring in assault or a more gallant courage in defence than that which raged in turn round each of these great fortresses. Of the three sieges, that of Badajos was the most picturesque and bloody; that of San Sebastian the most sullen and exasperated; that of Ciudad Rodrigo the swiftest and most brilliant.

A great siege tests the fighting quality of any army as nothing else can test it. In the night watches in the trenches, in the dogged toil of the batteries, and the crowded perils of the breach, all the frippery and much of the real discipline of an army dissolves. The soldiers fall back upon what may be called the primitive fighting qualities—the hardihood of the individual soldier, the daring with which the officers will lead, the dogged loyalty with which the men will follow.

As an illustration of the warlike qualities in our race by which empire has been achieved, nothing better can be desired than the story of how the breaches were won at Ciudad Rodrigo.

At the end of 1811, the British and the French were watching each other jealously across the Spanish border. The armies of Marmont and of Soult, 67,000 strong, lay within touch of each other, barring Wellington's entrance into Spain. Wellington, with 35,000 men, of whom not more than 10,000 were British, lay within sight of the Spanish frontier.

It was winter time; Wellington's army was wasted by sickness, his horses were dying of mere starvation, his men had received no pay for three months, and his muleteers none for eight months; he had no siege-trains, his regiments were ragged and hungry, and the French generals confidently put the British army as for the moment out of consideration.

And yet at that precise moment, Wellington, subtle and daring, was meditating a leap upon the great frontier fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the Spanish province of Salamanca. Its capture would give him a safe base of operation against Spain; it was the great frontier base for the French; the whole siege equipage and stores of the army of Portugal were contained in it.

The problem of how, in the depth of winter, without materials for a siege, to snatch a place so strong from under the very eyes of two armies, each stronger than his own, was a problem which might have taxed the warlike genius of a Cæsar. But Wellington accomplished it with a combination of subtlety and audacity simply marvellous.

He kept the secret of his design so perfectly that his own engineers never suspected it, and his adjutant-general, Murray, went home on leave without dreaming anything was going to happen. Wellington collected artillery, ostensibly for the purpose of arming Almeida, but the guns were transhipped at sea and brought simply to the mouth of the Douro. No fewer than 800 mule carts were constructed without anybody guessing their purpose.

Wellington, while these preparations were on foot, was keenly watching Marmont and Soult till he saw that they were lulled into a state of mere yawning security; and then, in Napier's expressive phrase, he "instantly junped with both feet upon Ciudad Rodrigo."

This famous fortress, in shape, roughly resembles a triangle with the angles truncated. The base looking to the south is covered by the Agueda, a river given to sudden inundations; the fortifications were strong and formidably armed, as outwards it had to the east the great fortified convent of San Francisco, to the west a similar building called Santa Cruz, whilst almost parallel with the northern face rose two rocky ridges called the Great and Small Teson, the nearest within 600 yards of the city ramparts, and crowned by a formidable redoubt called Francisco.

The siege began on January 8th. The soil was rocky and covered with snow; the nights were black, the weather bitter. The men lacked entrenching tools. They had to encamp on the side of the Agueda furthest from the city, and ford that river every time the trenches were relieved. The 1st, 3rd, and Light Divisions formed the attacking force; each division held the trenches in turn for twenty-four hours.

Let the reader imagine what degree of hardihood it took to wade in the grey and bitter winter dawn through a half-frozen river, without fire or warm food, and under a ceaseless rain of shells from the enemy's guns, to toil in the frozen trenches, or to keep watch—while the icicles hung from eyebrows and beard—over the edge of the battery for twenty-four hours in succession.

Nothing in this great siege is more wonderful than the fierce speed with which Wellington urged his operations. Massena, who had besieged and captured the city the year before in the height of summer, spent a month in bombarding it before he ventured to assault. Wellington broke ground on January 8th, under a tempest of mingled hail and rain; he stormed it on the night of the 19th.

He commenced operations by leaping on the strong work that crowned the Great Teson the very night the

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siege began. Two companies from each regiment of the Light Division were detailed by the officer of the day, Colonel Colborne, for the assault.

Colborne (afterwards Lord Seaton)—a cool and gallant soldier—called his officers together in a group, and explained with great minuteness how they were to attack. He then launched his men against the redoubt with a vehemence so swift that, to those who watched the scene under the light of a wintry moon, the column of British spanned the ditch, shot up the glacis, and broke through the parapet with a single movement.

The accidental explosion of a French shell burst the gate open, and the remainder of the attacking party instantly swept through it. There was fierce musketry fire and a tumult of shouting for a moment or two, but in twenty minutes from Colborne's launching his attack every Frenchman in the redoubt was killed, wounded, or a prisoner.

The fashion in which the gate was blown open was very curious. A French sergeant was in the act of throwing a live shell upon the storming party in the ditch, when he was struck by an English bullet. The lighted shell fell from his hands within the parapet, and was kicked by the nearest French away in mere self-preservation; it rolled towards the gate, exploded, burst it open, and instantly the British broke in!

For ten days a desperate artillery duel raged between the besiegers and the besieged. The parallels were resolutely pushed on in spite of rocky soil, broken tools, bitter weather, and the incessant pelting of the French guns.

The temper of the British troops is illustrated by an incident which George Napier—the youngest of the three Napiers—relates. The three brothers were gallant and remarkable soldiers. Charles Napier, in India and elsewhere, made history; William, in his wonderful tale of the Peninsular War, wrote history; and George, if he had not the literary genius of the one, nor the strategic skill of the other, was a most gallant soldier.

"I was a field officer of the trenches," he says, "when a 13in. shell from the town fell in the midst of us. I called to the men to lie down flat, and they instantly obeyed orders, except one of them, an Irishman and an old marine, but a most worthless, drunken dog, who trotted up to the shell, the fuse of which was still burning, and striking it with his spade, knocked the fuse out. Then, taking the immense shell in his hands, brought it to me, saying:

"'There she is for you, yer 'anner; I've knocked the life out of the crater!'"

The besieged brought fifty heavy guns to reply to the thirty light pieces by which they were assailed. Day and night the bellow of eighty pieces boomed sullenly over the doomed city and echoed faintly back from the nearer hills, while the walls crashed to the stroke of the bullet. The English fire made up by fierceness and accuracy for what it lacked in weight; but the sap made no progress, the guns showed signs of being worn out, and although two apparent breaches had been made, the counterscarp was not destroyed.

Yet Wellington determined to attack, and, in his characteristic fashion, to attack by night. The siege had lasted ten days, and Marmont, with an army stronger than the British, was laying within four marches. That he had not appeared already on the scene was wonderful.

In a general order issued on the evening of the 19th Wellington wrote: "Ciudad Rodrigo *must* be stormed this evening." The great breach was a sloping gap in the wall at its northern angle, about a hundred feet wide. The French had crowned it with two guns loaded with grape; the slope was strewn with bombs, hand-grenades and bags of powder; a great mine pierced it beneath; a deep ditch had been cut betwixt the breach and the adjoining ramparts; and these were crowded with riflemen. The Third Division, under General Mackinnon, was to attack the breach, its forlorn hope being led by Ensign Mackie, its storming party by General Mackinnon himself.

The lesser breach was a tiny gap, scarcely twenty feet wide, to the left of the great breach; this was to be attacked by the Light Division under Crauford, its forlorn hope of twenty-five men being led by Gurwood, and its storming party by George Napier.

General Pack, with a Portuguese brigade, was to make a sham attack on the eastern face, while a fourth attack was to be made on the southern front by a company of the 83rd and some Portuguese troops.

In the storming party of the 83rd were the Earl of March, afterwards Duke of Richmond, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, afterwards Lord Raglan, and the Prince of Orange—all volunteers without Wellington's knowledge.

At seven o'clock a curious silence fell suddenly on the battered city and engirdling trenches. Not a light gleamed from the frowning parapets, not a murmur arose from the blackened trenches. Suddenly a shout broke out on the right of the English attack; it ran, a wave of stormy sound, along the line of the trenches. The men who were to attack the great breach leapt into the open. In a moment the space betwixt the hostile lines was covered with the stormers, and the gloomy, half-seen face of the great fortress broke into a tempest of fire.

Nothing could be finer than the vehement courage of the assault, unless it were the cool and steady fortitude of the defence. Swift as was the upward rush of the stormers, the race of the 5th, 77th, and 94th regiments was almost swifter. Scorning to wait for the ladders, they leapt into the great ditch, outpaced even the forlorn hope, and pushed vehemently up the great breach, whilst their red ranks were torn by shell and shot. The fire, too, ran through the tangle of broken stones over which they climbed; the hand-grenades and powder-bags by which it was strewn exploded.

The men were walking on fire! Yet the attack could not be denied.

The Frenchmen—shooting, stabbing, yelling—were driven behind their retrenchments. There the fire of the houses commanding the breach came to their help, and they made a gallant stand.

"None would go back on either side, and yet the British could not get forward, and men and officers falling in heaps choked up the passage, which from minute to minute was raked with grape from the two guns flanking the top of the breach at the distance of a few yards. Thus striving and trampling alike upon the dead and the wounded, these brave men maintained the combat."

It was the attack on the smaller breach which really carried Ciudad Rodrigo; and George Napier, who led it, has left a graphic narrative of the exciting experiences of that dreadful night. The Light Division was to attack, and Crauford, with whom Napier was a favourite, gave him command of the storming party.

He was to ask for 100 volunteers from each of the three British regiments—the 43rd, 52nd, and the Rifle Corps—in the division. Napier halted these regiments just as they had forded the bitterly cold river on their way to the trenches.

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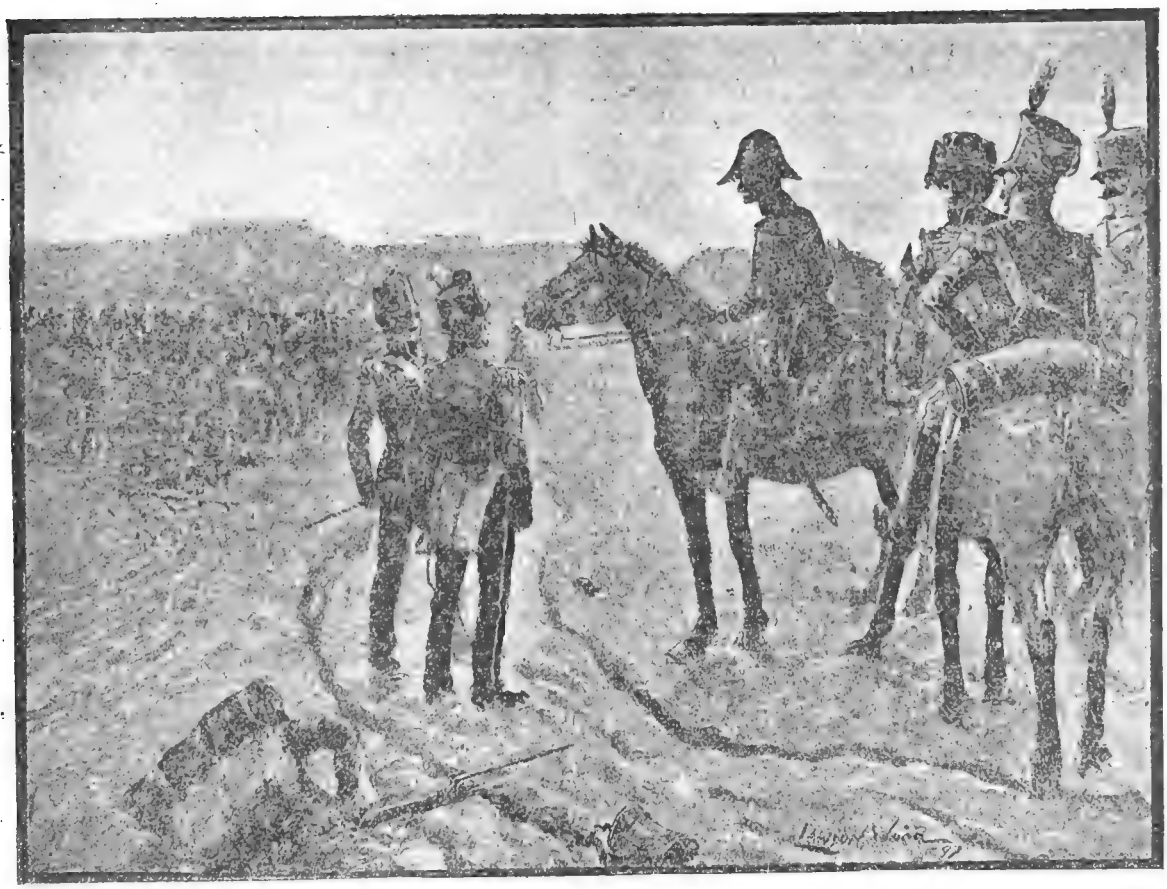

"Let him alone," said Wellington. "Let him go his own way!"

"Soldiers," he said, "I want a hundred men from each regiment to form the storming party which is to lead the Light Division to-night. Those who will go with me come forward."

Instantly there was a rush forward of the whole division, and Napier had to take his 300 men out of a tumult of nearly 1,500 candidates. He formed them into three companies, under Captains Ferguson, Jones, and Mitchell; Gurwood, of the 52nd, led the forlorn hope, consisting of twenty-five men and two sergeants. Wellington himself came to the trench and showed Napier and Colborne, through the gloom of the early night, the exact position of the breach.

A staff officer looking on said:

"Your men are not loaded. Why don't you make them load?"

Napier replied:

"If we don't do the business with the bayonet we shall not do it at all. I shall not load."

"Let him alone," said Wellington. "Let him go his own way!"

Picton had adopted the same grim policy with the 3rd Division. As each regiment passed him, filing into the trenches, his injunction was:

"No powder! We'll do the thing with the *cold* iron."

A party of Portuguese carrying bags filled with grass were to run with the storming party and throw the bags into the ditch, as the leap was too deep for the men. But the Portuguese hesitated, the tumult of the attack on the great breach suddenly broke on the night, and the forlorn hope went running up, leapt into the ditch, a depth of eleven feet, and clambered up the steep slope beyond, while Napier with his stormers came with a run behind them.

In the dark for a moment the breach was lost, but found again, and up the steep quarry of broken stone the attack swept. About two-thirds of the way up Napier's arm was smashed by a grapeshot, and he fell. His men, checked for a moment, lifted their muskets to the gap above them, whence the French were firing vehemently, and, forgetting their pieces were unloaded, snapped them.

"Push on with the bayonet, men!" shouted Napier, as he lay bleeding. The officers leapt to the front, the men with a stern shout followed; they were crushed to a front of not more than three or four; they had to climb without firing a shot in reply up to the muzzles of the French muskets.

But nothing could stop the men of the Light Division.

A 24-pounder was placed across the narrow gap in the ramparts; the stormers leapt over it, and the 43rd and 52nd, coming up in sections abreast, followed; the 43rd wheeled to the right towards the great breach, the 52nd to the left, sweeping the ramparts as they went.

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Meanwhile the two other attacks had broken into the town, but at the great breach the dreadful fight still raged, until the 43rd, coming swiftly along the ramparts, and brushing all opposition aside, took the defence in the rear. The British there had, as a matter of fact, at that exact moment pierced the French defence.

The two guns that scourged the breach had wrought deadly havoc amongst the stormers, and a sergeant and two privates of the 88th—Irishmen all, and whose names deserve to be preserved—Brazel, Kelley, and Swan—laid down their firelocks that they might climb more lightly, and, armed only with their bayonets, forced themselves through the embrasure amongst the French gunners.

They were furiously attacked, and Swan's arm was hewed off by a sabre stroke; but they stopped the service of the gun, killed six of the French gunners, and held the post until the men of the 5th, climbing behind them, broke into the battery.

So Ciudad Rodrigo was won, and its Governor surrendered his sword to the youthful lieutenant leading the forlorn hope of the Light Division, who, with smoke-blackened face, torn uniform, and staggering from a dreadful wound, still kept at the head of his men.

In the eleven days of the siege Wellington lost 1,300 men and officers, out of which 650 men and sixty officers were struck down on the slopes of the breaches. Two notable soldiers died in the attack—Crauford, the famous leader of the Light Division, as he brought his men up to the lesser breach, and Mackinnon, who commanded a brigade of the 3rd Division, at the great breach.

Mackinnon was a gallant Highlander, a soldier of great promise, beloved by his men. His "children," as he called them, followed him up the great breach till the bursting of a French mine destroyed all the leading files, including their general. Crauford was buried in the lesser breach itself, and Mackinnon in the great breach—fitting graves for soldiers so gallant.

Alison says that with the rush of the English stormers up the breaches of Ciudad Rodrigo "began the fall of the French Empire!" That siege, so fierce and brilliant, was, as a matter of fact, the first of that swift following succession of strokes which drove the French in ruin out of Spain; and it coincided in point of time with the turn of the tide against Napoleon in Russia. Apart from all political results, however, it was a splendid feat of arms. The French found themselves almost unable to believe the evidence of their senses.

"On the 16th," Marmont wrote to the Emperor, "the English batteries opened their fire at a great distance. On the 19th the place was taken by storm. There is something so *incomprehensible* in this that I allow myself no observations."

Napoleon, however, relieved his feelings with some very emphatic observations.

"The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo," he wrote to Marmont, "is an affront to you. Why had you not advices from it twice a week? What were you doing with the five divisions of Souham? It is a strange mode of carrying on war."

This is the end of this series. Next week we shall start a fresh series under the general heading:

"Men Who Made the Empire,"

By MR. GEORGE GRIFFITHS.

Result of "Short Stories" Picture Puzzles

(No. 1 SERIES).

23 Prizes Offered; 32 Awarded.

No one succeeded in forwarding an absolutely correct list. Two competitors sent lists with only two solutions incorrect. The first of these to be dealt with came to hand from

P. F. LARKMAN, 23, Weltje Road, Hammersmith, W.,

who therefore receives the first prize of £20, the second prize of £10 going to

R. STEPHENS, 34, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury.

Thirty competitors forwarded lists with only three mistakes, and to these the prizes have been awarded according to the order in which they were dealt with. Third prize of £5,

Miss A. CONRADI, 334, City Road, E.C.

4th to 13th Prizes of £1.

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14th to 23rd Prizes of 10s.

W. R. May, 6, Ringmer Avenue, Munster Road, Fulham; G. E. Pescud, 99, Fairfoot Road, Bow, E.; Miss Batterbury, Berkhamsted; L. O'Callaghan, 17, Alma Road, Monkstown, co. Dublin; E. Storey, 17, Dale Street, Burslem, Staffs; E. A. Goudge, 480, Seven Sisters Road, N.; Mrs. B. L. A. Dove, St. Michaels, Sunbury-on-Thames; Miss. J. McLellan, 166, Great Hamilton Street, Glasgow; Miss M. Faunthorpe, Elmfield, Bromley Common, Kent; E. D. Clark, 30, Chelsham Road, Clapham, S.W.

Nine Consolation Prizes of 10s,

O. Holman, Cliffnook, Newark; Miss G. Clark, 30, Chelsham Road, Clapham, S.W.; W. E. F. Walker, 25, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, W.C.; J. J. Cowhey, 13, Haydock Road, Liscard, Cheshire; E. Goodwin, Goat Street, Haverfordwest, S. Wales; A. F. Northcote, Holmwood, Streatham, S.W.; J. J. Cowhey, 13, Haydock Road, Liscard, Cheshire; A. J. Smithers, Elm Road, Green Street, Green, Orpington, Kent; F. T. Price, 55, Lowesmoor, Worcester.

The correct list is as follows:

1st Set.	2nd Set.	3rd Set.
1. Butcher	11. Wickham	21. Abel Smith
2. Hart Dyke	12. Pennant	22. Monckton
3. Maple	13. Ferryman Bowles	23. Dunn
4. Webster	14. Austin	24. Ashton
5. Gorst	15. Baker	25. Firbank
6. Coghill	16. Bass	26. Jonathan Samuel
7. Brigg	17. Wingfield Digby	27. Horniman
8. Woodhouse	18. Gully	28. Cochrane
9. Martin Dane	19. Bill	29. Hutchinson
10. Carson	20. Arch	30. Weir

4th Set.	5th Set.
31. Howell	31. Willoughby de Eresby
32. Holburn	32. Pickard
33. Phillpotts	33. Newdigate
34. Fisher	34. Wylie
35. Holland	35. Hall
36. Owen	36. Strutt
37. Green	37. Daly
38. More	38. Hatch
39. M'Cartan	39. Spicer
40. Curran	40. Darling

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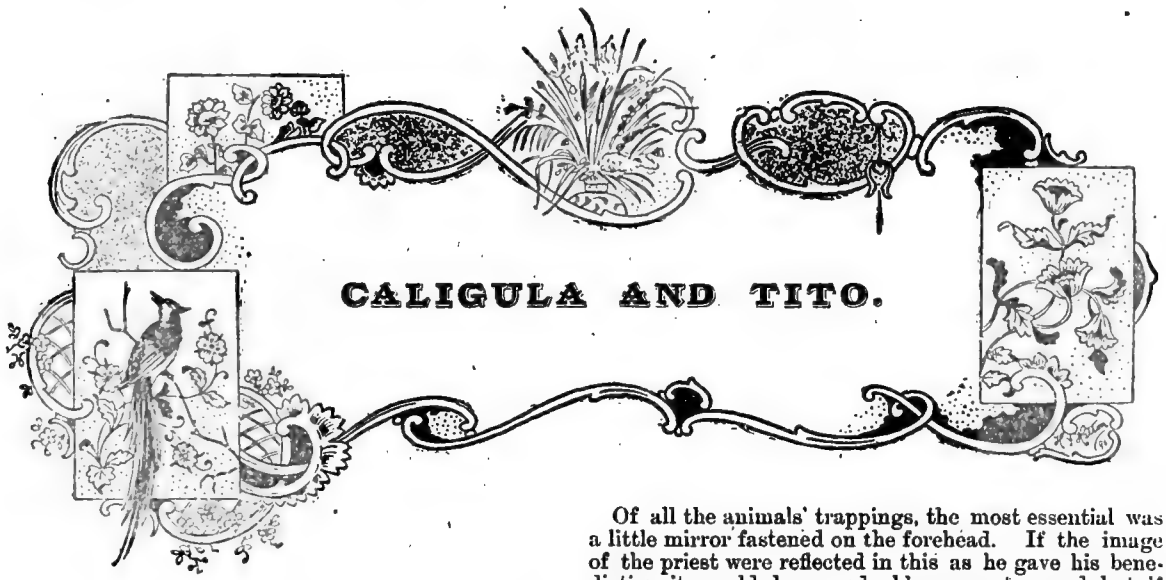

CALIGULA AND TITO.

I.

It was the eve of the feast of St. Antonio, and Oreste Lavigni, the handsomest muleteer in Nervi, by Genoa, was busily grooming Caligula, more familiarly known as 'Gula, who was also the handsomest mule in Nervi. True, he had a somewhat dangerous rival in Tito, and thereby hangs the tale which follows.

Tito was the property of Beatrice Foscetta, who was not only the prettiest girl on the countryside but a proprietress to boot, since she was an orphan, and had inherited from her parents a snug little farm some distance up the valley and all the live-stock, the gem of these last being the rival of 'Gula. Oreste and Beatrice had been friends since the time when they had run barefooted and bare-legged on the sands at Nervi, chasing the waves back to the sea, and then fleeing in childish mock terror from them as they rolled back up the beach.

If Oreste had had his way they would now have been something much nearer and dearer than playmates, but Beatrice, although only twenty, was a young lady of a distinctly practical turn of mind, and although no other of her many suitors had ever been given the slightest reason to believe that she would choose anyone else, still, when Oreste himself pressed the question, she told him plainly that she had no intention of confiding herself and her property to a man who was too lazy to work at his father's trade, and preferred to dress himself up and trust to the effect of his smartness and good looks on the English and American ladies who hired Gula and himself for excursions into the mountains. There were ill-natured gossips who said her objection was not altogether founded on worldly prudence, but be that as it may, Beatrice had certainly spoken so plainly on the subject that in the end they were hardly on speaking terms.

Now, the great function of the feast of St. Antonio was the blessing of the animals by the priest in front of the little church up the valley. The good man's words and the dash of holy water that he sprinkled over them would protect them from sickness and accident for the whole year, and so, naturally, the occasion was worthy of the greatest pains on the part of their owners.

Of all the animals' trappings, the most essential was a little mirror fastened on the forehead. If the image of the priest were reflected in this as he gave his benediction it would have a double power for good, but, if not, it was a bad omen. Now Oreste, to make sure of this, put two mirrors on 'Gula, and very smart and handsome he looked, as he rode up the hill on his shapely and well-groomed beast.

Not very far behind him came Beatrice with Tito, and presently when the road began to get steep, she dismounted to save her favourite's legs, and as she went to walk by his head, she saw to her dismay that the mirror was gone, shaken off no doubt lower down the road, and by this time probably trodden to fragments.

What was to be done? To go on without the mirror was to seek only half a blessing, perhaps not even that, and yet to go back—no, that was not to be thought of, since everyone would say that she had feared to challenge comparison between Tito and 'Gula.

She was walking on with downcast eyes when, suddenly, as though put there by some miracle, she saw a little brass-framed mirror lying in the road right under Tito's nose. She sprang forward and picked it up, not thinking in her delight that it had most likely fallen from some other mule, and fastened it on Tito's forehead.

Oreste, who had arrived first before the chapel, was standing chatting with some friends as she came up. He looked round at her out of the corners of his eyes, and she saw him start and turn swiftly round towards where 'Gula was standing. One of his mirrors was gone, and there it was hanging between Tito's ears! With a loud cry he ran towards her, shouting:

"Where did you get that? You would not ask me for it. You didn't think I was worth that, I suppose, so you stole it. Are you not rich enough to buy one for yourself! Give it back to me."

Then, ignoring the look of amazement on her face, he snatched away the mirror and began to vent his rage upon the innocent Tito with his whip. Several of the by-standers, seeing this, ran up. One snatched the whip away from him, others tried to pull him away.

Then he drew his knife, and the matter might have been serious if just then the bell had not sounded for the animals to be brought up to receive the benediction.

The sound seemed to bring him to his senses, and he went away to 'Gula, considerably ashamed of himself,

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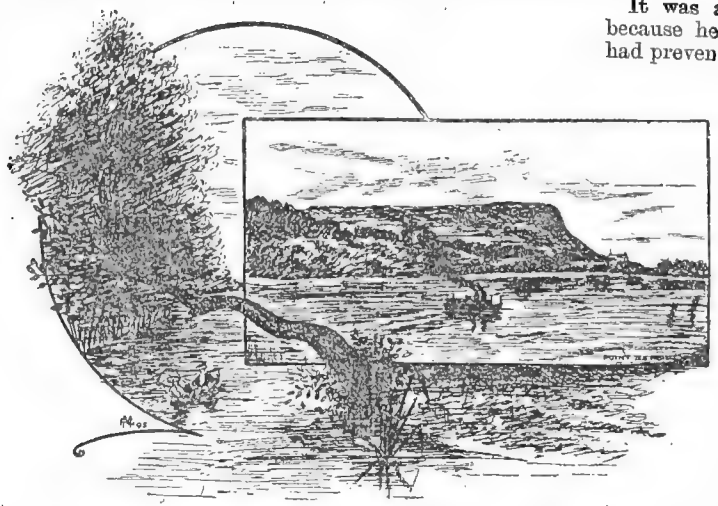
and after a time his turn came to lead 'Gula before the priest.

His anger had calmed down as quickly as it had risen, but the penalty for it was yet to come. As he advanced



towards the church steps, the priest, to his dismay, waved him aside and lowered the brush with which he sprinkled the holy water. He had seen the fight, and therefore refused the blessing. There was no appeal. 'Gula could have no benedict on that year because his master had profaned the festival.

With tears of grief and anger in his eyes, Oreste slowly retraced his steps, his mind divided between fear for the future and rage against Beatrice, whom he regarded as the cause of his misfortune.

"It is all her fault," he said to himself, as he rode back down the hill; "she must have forgotten her mirror, and stolen mine when my back was turned. Now her Tito will be safe and I have nothing!"

He sprang from his mule, threw his arms round its neck, and whispered:

"Keep well and strong, 'Gula; keep well, my beauty!" and he kissed its forehead with remorseful tenderness.

Beatrice returned from the fête in very bad spirits, too, for she could now see why Oreste had been so angry, and she wished from her heart that the mistake had not occurred. Once she thought of explaining the whole matter to him, but then her pride forbade that.

He had accused her of theft before all the people, had beaten her mule, and behaved like a madman. He did not deserve an explanation. What a good thing for her that she had refused to marry him, for with a temper like his no woman's life could be happy, or even safe. Still she was miserable, the unlucky incident weighed upon her mind and took all the zest out of her enjoyment.

II.

There are often strange coincidences in this life. For three years 'Gula had never ailed anything, but had eaten his food and done his work in the most satisfactory manner; however, about a week after the feast of St. Antonio he was off his feed, and stood in his stall with drooping ears and half-closed eyes. Oreste felt very anxious, and tried every remedy, but in vain—the third morning he found his friend and means of sustenance lying dead in his stable. His grief knew no bounds.

It was all his own fault, for the mule had died because he had not been blessed, and Oreste's violence had prevented it. He had since learnt the truth about the mirror, therefore he had no one but himself to blame.

His income was gone, and he was unable to earn money any other way, unless he went to the stone quarries, and that was hard work, badly paid. What was he to do? There was nothing but death for him, so he shut himself up in his room and refused to eat.

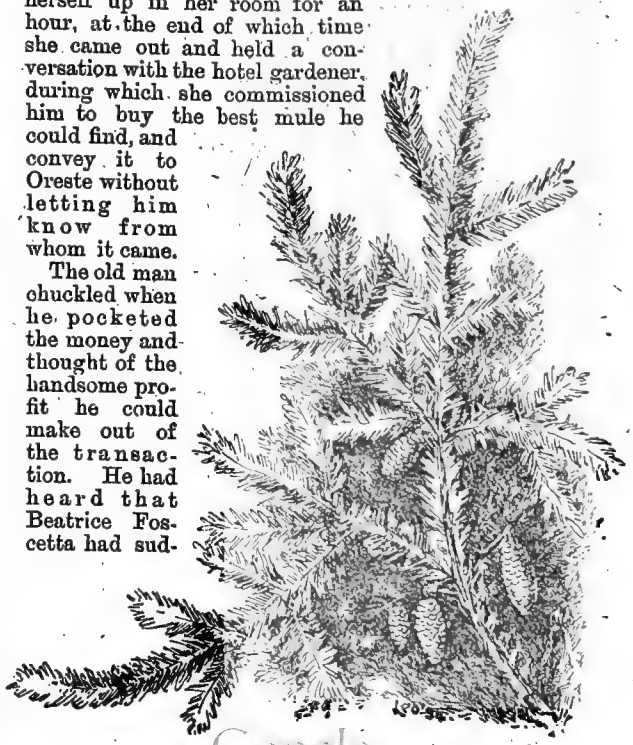
At last the authorities broke open his door and forced him to come out and take some food, for they could not let the foreigners know that anyone had died of starvation in Nervi.

A few days after this a rich American lady staying at the Hotel d'Inglese, sent to hire Oreste and his mule for a day's expedition, and as she was one of his best customers, he sadly sent back a message that his mule was dead, and he was too poor to buy another, so she must please to find someone else. She generally paid him twice as much as he asked, and gossip had been very free in discussing her great infatuation for the good-looking Italian.

He thought her old and ugly, but that had not prevented him from practising those arts upon her which vexed Beatrice so bitterly.

When Miss Grantley received this message she shut herself up in her room for an hour, at the end of which time she came out and held a conversation with the hotel gardener, during which she commissioned him to buy the best mule he could find, and convey it to Oreste without letting him know from whom it came.

The old man chuckled when he pocketed the money and thought of the handsome profit he could make out of the transaction. He had heard that Beatrice Foscetta had sud-



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denly decided to leave Nervi, and was selling her live stock at very moderate prices.

He determined therefore to buy Tito and keep the balance for himself.

Since Oreste's trouble people had looked rather coldly on Beatrice, some had even told her that it was her pride which had helped to ruin her old playmate, and this growing unpopularity affected her pocket, as the neighbours were not so ready to buy her butter and milk, so she made up her mind to go and live with her aunt at Genoa.

She was very unhappy, and often said to herself:

"If only Oreste were not so idle! There is no one so clever or so handsome, and I shall never love anyone else! If he would only alter, how different it might all be!"

The old gardener came to her, and bought Tito without saying a word about Miss Grantley or what was to be done with the mule.

Meanwhile Oreste had been wandering about the neighbourhood in search of work, doing what he could to earn just enough to keep himself from starvation; he could not hope for more, as he was unskilled in any trade, and had not been accustomed to hard manual labour.

He had lost all pride in himself, and many a time he ran short of food. One morning he had slept late, for he had no work and little breakfast to look forward to, when he awoke with the familiar sound of a chain rattling in the adjoining shed. He thought he was dreaming, but got out of bed to assure himself. Upon opening the door he saw a fine mule in 'Gula's stall. He could scarcely believe his eyes. He seemed to know the animal; *could* it be *Tito?*

He called it by name, and the mule looked round at once.

"Ah! Tito, it *is* you!" he cried, falling on his knees beside it.

"*She* has sent you. Beatrice—Beatrice—she will not forsake me in my misfortune. She loves me in spite of all I have done! She is the best and dearest girl in the world. Now, Tito, all will go well."

Oreste dressed himself quickly, and hurried off to Nervi to see Beatrice. As he was going along the main street, he chanced to look at the chief wine merchant's restaurant and there he saw her in earnest conversation with the proprietor. Forgetting everything but his delight and gratitude, he rushed up to her and threw his arms round her, exclaiming:

"Thank you, dearest, a thousand times! You have saved me! You have a noble heart! If I had not loved you so much I should not have been so angry with you!"

For a moment Beatrice thought that trouble had unhinged his mind; she was in the act of withdrawing from his embrace and calling for help, when she saw his sorrowful, loving gaze, and knew he was no madman. Another look showed her the lines of care and suffering in his face, and pity mastered all other feelings. She did not know what had happened to him, but to avoid further publicity, she told him to go and wait at her house till she joined him.

Seeing the amusement his appearance had caused the bystanders, she treated the matter as a joke, and soon followed her lover, whom she found anxiously waiting for her in the garden. Before he could renew his endearments she quietly said:

"Now, Oreste, tell me what all this means, and what you are thanking me for?"

"What this means?" he stammered. "*You* ask me! Will you deny that you still love me, and have shown your forgiveness in the most generous manner?"

"That I like you is no secret, Oreste; but how have I shown it lately?" asked the girl in bewilderment.

"Did you not put Tito in my shed this morning?"

"I?" she asked in astonishment.

"It was *not* you? Oh! do not trifle with me; it is cruel! Who else could have done it?"

"I know nothing about Tito now, for I sold him a few days ago."

"You have sold him—to whom?"

"To the gardener at the Hotel d'Inglese."

"Gardener—Hotel d'Inglese!" he gasped. "Ah, *maladetto!* Then it is the sallow American who has given me the beast!"

Oreste turned pale with disappointment and vexation.

"Yes; now you know, and you had better go at once to thank the rich, ugly lady you have always been so attentive to, and arrange for more long rides together," said Beatrice bitterly.

"No!" he said firmly; "I will give it back to her."

"No? do you really mean to return it? You will not take it from *her?* Then we will go together and I will buy back Tito."

"We? Together?" he repeated joyfully.

"Yes," she said calmly. "I know you love me, and I love you, and if you had been willing for my sake to give up your lazy ways and love of attracting the foreigners, all this would never have happened."

"But, Beatrice, I am completely cured of that nonsense, and have suffered terribly for my sins."

"Yes, I believe you, dear, but you must swear to me by St. Antonio, who has brought us together at last, that you will start a work-shop and keep steadily to it."

"I swear it by St. Antonio!" he said earnestly, and sealed his oath with a kiss.

"Now we must take Tito back," said Beatrice laughing.

He readily agreed, and they started off, hand-in-hand, as was the custom of engaged couples, to fetch the mule from Bogliasco. But rumour had been before them. Oreste's loving greeting in the restaurant that morning had given rise to the report that they were engaged; moreover the truth had leaked out about Miss Grantley's having bought Tito to replace Oreste's lost mule.

When all this came to the lady's ears, she made one of her rapid decisions, packed up, paid her bill, and had taken her seat in the express for Rome a few minutes before Beatrice and Oreste reached the Hotel d'Inglese.

When they heard that she had gone away so suddenly, leaving no address behind her, they looked at each other and laughed knowingly. It was impossible to carry out their intention, so they decided that she could well afford to lose the money, therefore they would regard Tito as a wedding present from Oreste's eccentric friend.

Mary Fermer.

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BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farm-houses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

At the end of three months they return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

Henceforth Diana devotes herself to the management of her father's house and dairy. She meets Gillway, and hears for the first time of the relations which had existed between him and Kitty. Soon after, the Stranges are surprised by the arrival of Kitty and the Nabob, who explain that they were married that morning, and have come to spend their honeymoon at Greyhouse Farm!

CHAPTER VI.

Kitty Makes a Confession.

"It was a very pretty wedding, only we kept it quiet because of that horrid John Gillway," said Kitty, as she arranged her hair in Di's room before going down to tea—the Nabob and Farmer Strange were in the farm-yard. "I had heaps of lovely presents. I was so afraid of it—the wedding—getting to John's—to Mr. Gillway's ears, you know, and if he had come up and made a scene—shot *me*, for instance, how awful it would have been! I am so sorry I flirted with him. Hasn't he really said anything about me, Di?"

"He asked me if you were coming home, and he was angry when he heard that you had deceived him. He won't hurt you, Kitty. He said he should not."

"But he's so dangerous—and I'm afraid of him! I shall never dare to go out-doors while we're here. I begged Bernie not to bring me home. He only laughed. He has no idea what a revengeful man John—Mr. Gillway is. If you only knew the awful threats that he used once—when he forced me to promise to marry him! He said that there was no harm too deadly for him to do to the man who married me."

"Men often say foolish things in excitement."

"Ah, but he is different to any other man! I shall try hard to get Bernie away after a day or two. Di—were you greatly surprised to-day? At Capri auntie and I thought that Bernie was in love with you. He—told me at the Malets—when he proposed, you know—how greatly he admired you—but—but—of course, you knew all along that he didn't love you—didn't you, dear?"

"Yes," Di answered quietly.

Kitty patted a stray curl into its proper position as she said: "He's such a dear boy, Di! So kind, and as gentle as a woman! I'm a very lucky girl, don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Di again.

Kitty heaved a sigh, looked out of the window, and then coming to Di's chair, she said in a very low tone: "I'm so unhappy, Di! I've got to tell Bernie something, and I'm afraid. You know that I never could confess things like you. I'm too nervous. Oh, I've got such a wretched lump here—you can't think," she added, touching her breast—"it makes me miserable!" Kneeling by Di's side and clasping her hands in her sister's lap, she added: "It can't really matter to Bernie—because he's so awfully rich, isn't he, and I know that he loves me dearly, so that the loss of the money is really nothing. I should have told him at once—if he had been poor—as soon as ever auntie explained things to me. She didn't want me to marry Bernie so soon. I believe she thought he was going to marry *her*: she wore such stupid little bonnets and *such* tight corsets! She cried, too, when I told her that he wanted to marry me, and she made a lot of fuss, and said that I was too young, and she should withold my dowry until she saw how my marriage turned out, and she told me to tell Bernie that I was penniless. I didn't like to, Di! It did seem such a humiliating thing after Mrs. Malet had told him that I should have thirty thousand pounds!"

"Does he believe that aunt has given you the money?" asked Di quickly.

"He thinks it is settled upon me. He has never asked me a word about it. Mrs. Malet told him; you know what a chatterbox she is. The worst of it is," said Kitty, with a long sigh, "aunt asked me if Bernie knew that I had no money, and I said he did. It was wicked to tell such a falsehood, I know—but, oh, Di, you can't think how much I love Bernie! and I was so dreadfully afraid that aunt would do something to stop our wedding."

"Oh, Kitty!" Di exclaimed, rising from her chair, "you must tell the truth to your husband at once! You can never hope to be happy with a secret standing between you——"

"I shall tell him some day," Kitty interrupted, pouting her pretty, rosy lips. "Of course I shall! I always intended to. But not just yet, Di. It might spoil our honeymoon."

"It may spoil your whole life! Don't you understand that it will hurt your husband to discover your want of candour? And every day that passes will make it harder for you to tell him. Let him know everything to-day."

Kitty skipped back to the mirror, gave another pat to her curls, and drew aside the short curtains. She kissed her

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hand to someone in the garden below, nodding her head and smiling.

"They are coming in," said she. "Do I look nice?"

Di paid no attention to the question. The expression of pain deepened on her face.

"Kitty," she said, "promise me that you will tell everything to your husband now. It is so easy to forgive when one loves, and he loves you dearly. Tell him to-night."

"Oh, I couldn't! Indeed, I couldn't," cried Kitty. "It is very easy for you to talk like that. You always could tell dad or Aunt Lou-lou when you had done anything wrong. It makes me feel cold with fear even to think of confessing. I hate aunt! A nasty old thing to break her promise in this cruel way. It's all her fault that I've got this worry!"

"I wish you would tell your husband now," persisted Di, pushing one hand through her hair. "I feel sure that you would be happier afterwards!"

"So do I. Only I *can't* tell him. And it isn't as though I shouldn't have the money later on, you know. When

"I'm so unhappy, Di."

aunt sees what an exemplary couple we are, she is sure to give me the money. Besides, Bernie didn't ask me if I had any fortune."

"Did he ask Mrs. Malet?"

"I don't know. She told me she had told him."

Di reflected with serious eyes and lips. To her, this secret that Kitty treated so lightly was a grave and terrible matter.

"Did your husband make any marriage settlement upon you, Kitty?"

Kitty nodded as she ran from the room.

"Fifty thousand pounds," she answered over her shoulder, and the next moment Diana heard her laughing in the passage with the Nabob.

She joined them, looking so pre-occupied and troubled that her father noticed the shadow upon her face.

"Butter not up to the mark?" he asked, looking lovingly at her as she sat behind the big tea-tray in the sitting-room, with the Nabob at her left hand and Kitty upon her right. "Di turns out rare butter," he added, speaking now to his son-in-law; "as firm and as sweet as a nut, sir."

"This is delicious butter," said the Nabob politely, while Kitty flushed scarlet and touched her father's foot beneath the table.

"Hey?" said Farmer Strange, turning to her. "What is it? You always was a first-rate hand at putting away lardy-roll. Take the plate, my girl, take the plate."

"I hate lardy-roll," exclaimed Kitty petulantly.

"You've changed then since you was home last," said her father. "If you don't want anything from my end of the table, what did you knock me for?"

"Oh, I didn't mean to touch *you*," Kitty cried, lowering her eyes.

Her father looked at the Nabob and chuckled. The young man had succeeded in winning the farmer's heart already by his discrimination in discerning good cattle from indifferent ones, and his interest in everything appertaining to the farm.

"Oh, I see," said he. "Well, I know what it is to be married myself. When I brought your dear mother home here, I let everything about the place go to rack and ruin for high on a month. I couldn't believe, somehow, that she really belonged to me—no, I couldn't, and I followed her about like a little lap-dog. Lord! what a time ago that seems!"

Di looked at the Nabob. He was watching Farmer Strange with a kind expression in his blue-grey eyes. His face was so candid and sympathetic that Di felt sure he would not be angry with Kitty if she confessed her deception that night. Di's greatest fear was that the Nabob would feel wounded at the lack of trust in his love that Kitty had betrayed. She thought of John Gillway's bitter words. Would Kitty's husband despise her if by this want of honesty she fell from the pedestal upon which every person in love stands the object of his or her affections? Kitty had made a wrong start in her new life; but it was not—it could not—be, too late to make a fresh beginning.

"She *must* tell him!" thought Di, growing more and more troubled.

"Butter's A1," said her father, again observing the worried look in her frank eyes. He stuck his knife into the heart of a golden pat, and dug out a lump, smelt it, and spread it upon a slice of bread, disdaining with a jerk of his elbow the plate of wafer-like bread-and-butter that Kitty offered him. "I never did care for those mouthfuls," said he, indicating the plate with a second jerk. "I like a good thick hunk that I can stick my teeth into."

The distress in Kitty's crimson face was so acute that Di felt sorry for her suffering. Farmer Strange had insensibly fallen into the manners of the rough farm-hands, in whose sole society so much of his lonely life had been passed. Sometimes Di winced when she saw him eat, and occasionally some of his rough and ready expressions jarred upon her. But one glance at her father's face acted like a panacea.

"It's very hot," said Kitty, "Let us go into the garden."

She pushed back her chair, cast a commanding, loving glance at her husband, and, going to the door, lingered there while he drank his tea and smiled at her.

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"Hot!" exclaimed her father, pausing with his great slice of bread-and-butter in mid-air. "What a one you are for getting cranks in your head. It's as cool as a cucumber here."

"Well, I'm hot," said Kitty a little sharply.

The Nabob handed his tea-cup to Di, throwing a laughing glance at Kitty's pouting face.

"Half-a-minute, Kitty," said he. "I'm so jolly thirsty, and I've never tasted such exquisite tea as this in all my life. What do you put in it, Di? Is it the cream, or have you found out the secret of making nectar?"

"Bernie, are you coming?"

"Di always was a capital hand at making a good cup of tea," said her father fondly. "Lord, sir, you can't think what a difference it makes having her about the place! There ain't many gals as would have given up fifteen thousand pounds, and the chance of being a lady, to come here and make butt——"

"Bernie, *are* you coming?" called Kitty, with the sound of tears in her voice.

The Nabob rose at once, and, smiling at Di and her father, went from the parlour with his arm round Kitty's waist. Farmer Strange looked after him with approval.

"As nice a young man as ever stepped in shoe-leather," said he, nodding his head. "And that affable, and no more pride in him than you'd find in my old hat! Says I to him: 'You don't object to my smoking a clay-pipe?' 'Not I,' says he. 'There's nothing like 'em for sweetness and drawing,' and with that, out he pulls one from his pocket, and we lit up together in the yard yonder and had a whiff. Smart young chap, too! He's got a lot in him! Knows how many beans make five, and don't make any fuss about his knowledge. He gave me to understand—delicately—of course, that he didn't hold with separating children from their parents, and that when he bought an estate, the best room in the house 'ud be for *me*. He's my sort, Di. Kitty's a lucky girl as well as a pretty one."

Betty carried away the tea-things, Farmer Strange went out with his pipe to look after the men, and Di, tormented with anxiety, sat alone in the low parlour and stared in despair at the gay Japanese fans and Liberty hangings with which she and Kitty had adorned its walls. She was still sitting there when the Nabob came hastily into the room.

"I've come to take you out," said he in his bright, cheery voice. "Kitty's found a swing in the orchard——" He paused and added anxiously: "I say, you're not in trouble, Di?"

Di hesitated a moment, looking with shadowed eyes into the handsome, concerned face bending over her.

"I don't suppose I can help you," said the Nabob. "We men are such clums*y*, tactless fools; but if I could, Di, you ought to know how readily I would. You are my sister now, you know. Won't you try me? I could see at tea that you were worried. I knew the butter was not responsible for the anxiety in your eyes. Tell me what is the bother," he said in a gentle tone, and drawing a chair by her side.

"I don't quite know if I ought," Di said. "It is not my secret—it is Kitty's. It troubles me—because I know she is miserable. She can't summon the courage to tell you. Kitty never did have much pluck, as dad calls it. She can't help it, you know—and I am sure you will forgive her—when she tells you."

The Nabob had taken her hand, and now he looked into her eyes with smiling good-humour.

"A secret of Kitty's!" he repeated in amusement. "Oh, I know what's bothering your little head. It's that flirtation of hers with the ferocious farmer—I forget his name——"

"No, no, it isn't that. It's a much more serious matter. Something about—about—money."

"About money," said the Nabob in the same gay voice. "Money, now. Let me see if I can help you. What could Kitty have to conceal from me about money?"

Holding Di's hand in one of his, he passed the other reflectively over his face, hiding it from her anxious regard. The clock upon the high black mantel-board seemed to have ticked a very long while before he uncovered his features, and turned to Di with a smile.

"I think I know," said he, pressing Di's fingers so hard that she winced with pain. "Poor little Kitty! Mrs. Caffyn has altered her mind about giving Kitty some money that she intended to give her. That's it! Eh? I can see it is! Poor Kitty! What on earth made her worry about such a trifle? And you, too, Di? As if money matters, when I've such a pile!"

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried Di with a gasp of relief. "Kitty said you wouldn't mind. Only—I thought it so awful to begin your new life together with a secret between you—and it has made her so wretched."

"Has it, though? Poor little girl! I say, she didn't think that I was marrying her for her money, did she, Di? Hang it all, *I shouldn't* like my wife to let such an unworthy suspicion enter her head."

His eyes had grown very bright and hard. He dropped Di's hand, and putting his own in his pockets, he strode to the end of the room, rattling the coins in them.

"No, by George, I wouldn't! There's something so infernally mean in a fellow who could do a dirty trick like that! Excuse me, Di—women are different. No one thinks it shabby in a penniless woman to marry a man with a pock-marked face and a fat banking account. If Kitty thought *that* of me—I don't think I could forgive her—no—I——"

"Oh, she didn't; indeed, she didn't!" cried Di, starting from her chair. "Please don't think that. How could she entertain such an idea when you are so rich? If you had been a poor man the case might have been looked at in that light——"

She paused, and a deep red flush crept to the roots of her hair. Was Kitty's conduct excusable? Would her husband think that she had married him for the very motive he was so fearful Kitty had attributed to himself?

"She loves you so much," Di added, and her voice had a desperate ring in it that struck harshly upon her sensitive ears, "so *very* much!"

The Nabob smiled as he pulled his tawny moustache.

"Dear little woman!" said he in a soft, tender tone. "Love is everything in this life, isn't it, Di? If I lost every penny piece to-morrow, it would make no difference in Kitty's love for me. That's good to think of, though we should be a pair of penniless love-birds then—Kitty having no money—for, of course, Mrs. Caffyn didn't give her a red cent?"

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He looked questioningly at Di, with the same bright light shining in his clear eyes.

"Not a farthing," said Di sorrowfully. "She is going to wait—to see how—your marriage turns out."

She was sorry the moment that she had said the words. The Nabob's face turned crimson with mortification, and—yes—Di felt sure that she was right in thinking that he was furiously angry.

"How kind of her!" said he. "How amiable and wise! Thank Heaven, we are not compelled to regulate our conduct in order to gratify her whims, and I'll answer for Kitty and myself, too. We shan't try to be good children just to please Mrs. Caffyn! Let her keep her money!"

He had returned to Di's side, but he was not looking at her. His regard was fixed upon the window where a fat bee was stupidly buzzing against the panes. From the garden Kitty's petulate voice called: "Ber—nie! Ber—nie!"

The Nabob turned and the shadows fled from his face. His habitual sunny expression settled once more in his eyes—the look of a man who feels that life is sweet and good, and that the world is full of pleasant paths that lead to happiness.

"I'll tease Kitty about this," he whispered. "The little puss! Come, Di, let's go out and swing. I feel since I've got into the country just as a school-boy feels when he goes home for the holidays; a kind of throwing up my cap in the air impulse, and I'm sure it would not take much to make me shout: 'Hip-hip-hurray!'"

Kitty . . . . watched Di flitting from room to room.

CHAPTER VII.

A New Departure.

Life flowed very smoothly at Greyhouse Farm during the first week of the Nabob's and Kitty's visit. Kitty was at all times intensely ashamed of her father, and it hurt her pride to see Diana going about the house in a servant's print gown and big white apron, and to know that Di made butter and packed it early every Thursday morning for a neighbouring market. But the Nabob was so delighted with the simple home-life, so keenly interested in learning every detail of farming, and so determined to close his eyes to the little rough places and to see only the bright sunshine about the farm, that Kitty could not help being influenced by his conduct. She grumbled when her husband left early in the morning to tramp over the corn-fields and meadows with her father, or when the two men rode away to attend the markets, and she was alone with Diana in the house sometimes all the day. She had not married to mope in that dull place, she told Di, and Bernie had promised to buy a country estate and to settle down in a home of their own.

She thought him selfish and unkind in staying on at Greyhouse Farm, where she had no amusements, and there was nobody to see her smart gowns and things.

"He wants to learn the management of a farm before he buys an estate," said Di, "and he gets on so splendidly with dad. Just think, Kitty, what a delightful companion dad finds him!"

"Oh, anybody is good enough to moon about stupid old turnip and rape fields with dad!" exclaimed Kitty peevishly. "And I don't believe Bernie likes it! He only does it just to please dad. I'm sure of it!"

"But he is so interested in everything," said Di in astonishment.

"How do you know? I don't believe he cares a pin about Shorthorns and Alderneys, white pigs, and black pigs, and all the rest of the horrid animals. It is his stupid good nature that makes him pretend he does. He's got the softest heart in the world!"

John Gillway had not once visited the farm since Kitty's arrival. Diana wondered if he had heard that Kitty was married, and if the wound in his heart had healed. She so often thought about him, and she missed his visits in a way that astonished and puzzled her, considering that she had so rarely talked with him when he came to see her father.

One morning at the mid-day meal in the great kitchen, Farmer Strango mentioned the mysterious tenant of Honeypots Farm, and told Di that he had taken the Nabob to see some prize heifers in Gillway's yard. Kitty blushed and played nervously with her serviette as she asked if Gillway had been amiable.

"He's a bit of a bear," said the Nabob lightly. "Seems to have had a University education. Something queer about him—I feel sure I've met him—or seen his portrait somewhere—he's got a remarkable face, eh?"

He looked at Di. She answered simply that she thought John Gillway was handsome.

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Gillway was still leaning against the wall.

"Oh, very," said the Nabob. "He's not exactly my sort. I never can care for people who don't seem quite open. That man impressed me disagreeably. But I'd forgotten I couldn't expect him to throw himself into my arms, considering that I've deprived him of Kitty."

She was sitting at his side. He passed his arm around her shoulder.

"No wonder the fellow scowled so murderously at me, you little flirt, Kitty!"

"I wish you wouldn't go near him," said Kitty, jerking herself away. "He's dangerous. I know he'll hurt you—or me!"

Her husband laughed and tried to stroke her hair as he said:

"Not he! He's quite got over his disappointment. You should have heard the tender way in which he asked after Di."

"*Di!*" exclaimed Kitty incredulously.

Di laughed. She knew she had blushed. It was very silly—but, somehow she felt quite happy to think that John Gillway had asked after her. All that day she sang as she moved about the house. Some of the June sunshine seemed to have entered her heart. Kitty, huddled disconsolately in a deep arm-chair with a book upon her knee, watched Di flitting from room to room.

"It's all very well for you," she grumbled. "You're like Bernie. You adore the country. If Bernie doesn't go away soon—I—I shall go mad!"

July came with its roses, and still the Nabob showed no sign of taking his wife away. His interest had not flagged in agriculture, and he was as keen as ever in losing no opportunity of attending markets with his father-in-law, and in learning all that the elder man could teach him of farming. The Nabob's fine friends would hardly have recognised him in the sunburnt strong young fellow who wore rough tweed clothes and smoked clay pipes, and who ate his meals in a flagged kitchen. He knew all Farmer Strange's acquaintances, and he was made welcome and liked by all. His unchanging good-humour, his pleasant, easy manners, and handsome face won him friends wherever he went. It was useless for Kitty to pout and sigh and remonstrate. The Nabob simply laughed at her exhibitions of hurt pride and bad temper, and accompanied her father to the village inn where nearly all the farming people assembled in the evenings, and drank ale or inferior whisky and listened to the gossip about the big county families, the crops, and the latest news in the papers with kindly interest.

When August came Kitty began to cry. She appeared late at breakfast, with red and swollen eyelids and pallid cheeks. Sometimes she would not speak to her husband, and the hitherto cheerful meals were marked with gloom and depression. The Nabob gave up the long walks with Farmer Strange, and endeavoured to get Kitty to accompany him in her father's place. Usually she refused with angry petulance. Then he sat patiently with her, trying to interest her in his conversation. He read aloud to her, and was rewarded by peevish words and yawns. He took Di into his confidence, and asked what was to be done. Much crying both by day and night had taken all the brightness from Kitty's face and eyes. Her little nose had a swollen, red appearance. She took no interest in her toilette, she who had always been so coquettish and dainty in her dress.

"I think," said Di frankly, in answer to the Nabob's question, "that you must take her away. She needs a change. She never did care for Thorneydene."

They were standing in the dairy. Kitty sat in the rose-covered porch, slatternly clothed, with untidy, roughened hair drawn into a fuzzy knot upon the summit of her head.

She looked years older than Diana as she sat staring with regretful eyes at the tall, gay hollyhocks and round, big-eyed sunflowers.

The Nabob's vexed, troubled regard wandered from Kitty and rested upon Diana's sweet serious face, and tall, simply clad figure. She looked brave and courageous. There was truth in every line of her face; strength in her hands with their long, broad-tipped fingers and well turned-back thumbs. As she stood watching Kitty with tender maternal solicitude in her beautiful eyes, the Nabob must have compared her with her sister, for a sudden impatient sigh escaped him.

"We are all so happy—all but Kitty!" said he regretfully. "Di, I sometimes wonder if I can ever make her happy."

"She will be happy if you give her more excitement. You see," said Di in an apologetic tone, "she has always been used to a lot of gaiety. It is dull here."

"*You* never find it dull."

"I am different."

"I remember your telling me at Capri how you loved the country, and I can understand it. There is a fascination in leading the simple, good, homely life that we have been leading together lately. *Must* I go, Di? Must I take Kitty away? Decide for me. I cannot!"

He had taken her hand, and unconsciously he pressed it between his, looking into her face with an expression that troubled her.

"I think you ought," she faltered. "Yes—I think you must go."

"If you tell me that it is my duty I will do it."

Di turned her eyes away, feeling strangely embarrassed, though she could not have told why.

"It must be your duty to make your wife happy," she

The Nabob took Kitty by the shoulders.

was about to say, when a shadow fell before them. John Gillway stood in the open doorway.

The Nabob dropped Di's hand and went forward with an unconstrained greeting, but Di knew that her cheeks were crimson and her lips twitching.

She heard Gillway saying that he had met Farmer Strange, who had asked him to let Miss Strange know that he must return late to dinner; a dog had got into a sheep-pen and had worried and injured some of the sheep.

"In Longacre field!" cried the Nabob. "I must go and see if I can help." With a bright nod to Di and a clasp of the hand to Gillway, he hurried away.

"It's a long time since we met," said Gillway, looking at Di with a curious compression of his lips.

She had recovered her self-control, though her heart was beating quickly, so quickly that she wondered if its rapid throbs were audible to the man leaning against the dairy door.

"Yes," she answered. "You never come to see dad now."

She had not meant to speak reproachfully, for what right had she to criticise John Gillway's actions? Perhaps it was only her fancy that there *was* an accent of reproach in her tones.

"I am afraid of meeting your sister."

Di drew up her head. A wave of angry indignation had surged over her.

"Afraid!" she cried, and Gillway winced beneath the scorn in her clear eyes. "Come and see her now; she is in the porch."

"Thanks. I'd rather not. It would be uncomfortable for both of us. Don't you understand, Miss Strange, that I might find it difficult to forget, and——"

"You ought to have forgotten everything," said Di. "I—I should be *ashamed* of myself if I were you."

She spoke passionately, angry at thinking that this man still loved Kitty—Kitty, who was making her husband miserable by her selfishness, and who had done her best to spoil John Gillway's life. Di had never seen how very much Kitty was to blame until John Gillway told her that he was afraid to meet his former sweetheart.

"I do feel ashamed—very often—but I don't find that it helps me," said Gillway in a quiet voice.

"Then it ought to help you," cried Di in fine indignation. "What is the use of being a man if you are not strong?"

She saw Gillway smile. She knew that she was illogical, and she suspected that she was ill-tempered. Di hardly knew her own emotions that day.

"If you don't mind," she said, "I should like to pass. I want to go into the house. I won't ask you to come, since you are *afraid*."

Gillway drew back at once. His face had whitened.

"I beg your pardon," he said, and Di read the concentrated passion in his dark eyes. She felt ashamed, and, once on her way to the kitchen, she half paused, asking herself if she had not acted foolishly and rudely, and whether she ought not to return and tell Gillway that she was sorry.

"No," she said to herself. "Why should I?"

And yet, almost with the last thought in her mind, she found herself hurrying back between the flaunting hollyhocks. Gillway was still leaning against the wall.

"I came to say that I don't know at all why I was so rude," said Di, holding out her hand. "But I *was* rude, fearfully rude, and it doesn't matter at all to me whether you're afraid to meet Kitty or not, but I am sorry—you *must* know that I'm sorry for speaking as I did."

Gillway's eyes had widened in surprise. As Di blurted out her sentences the muscles of his set face relaxed. It was as though a carved stone figure had been suddenly endowed with life.

He opened his lips to speak, but Di had once more flitted away, and he was left alone among the flowers and honey-seeking bees.

At the end of that same week, the Nabob took Kitty to inspect a fine old property called the Towers. The estate was about fifteen miles from Thorneydene. Its owner, Lord Powers, was compelled to reside abroad for two years, and he was anxious to find a tenant for the period of his absence.

The dwelling was an odd mixture of many styles and periods. It had been begun in the reign of Elizabeth, and added to from time to time according to the taste and requirements of its occupier. It took its name from a disused part of the house—an old wing with a couple of small towers, that looked like a pair of bloated pepper-pots.

Kitty brightened up at the pleasant prospect of becoming the mistress of a finer house than she had ever imagined reigning over in her wildest, and most ambitious dreams. True, it was still near hateful Thorneydene; but the prospect of filling the house with guests and of showing off the jewels that were now locked away in a bank was delightful to her.

And in addition to these joys, her husband had promised that in May she should rent a house in London for the season. The Nabob appeared resigned to quitting the simple life that he had so much enjoyed. He exacted promises from Di and Farmer Strange that they would visit him and give him an opportunity of returning their hospitality. At this period Di heard the Nabob for the first time speak harshly to Kitty. The house and all its appurtenances had been rented. Kitty's trunks were locked

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and strapped waiting to be carried away, and Kitty and the Nabob were standing in the sitting-room as Di came came down the passage.

"Your father must come for the shooting," the Nabob was saying jovially. "There's not any sport for the poor old chap here."

"Oh, Bernie!" exclaimed Kitty. "You *can't* ask dad! If you do we must shut up the house to everybody else. Just think how bad his manners are!"

Di had almost reached the door. She saw the Nabob's face pale, and a furious light spring in his eyes.

"By George, Kitty!" he exclaimed in a disgusted voice. "If you can't help thinking such things, you might keep from saying them! You make me *despise* you!"

Di drew back, uncertain whether to advance or recede.

"Oh, I know you don't love me any longer!" cried Kitty with quick resentment. "I'm not blind! I—I know quite well what has changed you—it is because Aunt Caffyn gave me no money, there!"

The Nabob took Kitty by the shoulders and looked fixedly into her eyes. Di shuddered and trembled as she watched. "It only wanted that," said the Nabob. "So you can think that of *me!*"

Did he shake her? Di could not tell. She ran back to her room and threw herself down by the bedside. Kitty came up for her at last, and marvelled at the pallor and anguish in her sister's face. She was all smiles, and looked as though she had never been angry or ruffled in her life.

"Bernie is waiting to say good-bye; the new carriage has come. I shan't be able to come over to see you to-morrow—I shall be so busy, and Bernie says it takes four hours, here and back—but the day after *you* might come. I'll send a carriage for you. And, Di, don't bring dad; he would feel so out of place in our surroundings, poor old dear!"

Di went down again and shook hands with the Nabob. His face was very pale, though he tried to smile.

"God bless you, dear Di," he said; "I can never thank you and your dear old dad enough for all your goodness to me! It's an understood thing, mind, that while we are at the Towers it is as much your home and your father's home as it will be mine and Kitty's, and at Christmas we will have a real, good, old-fashioned house-warming, with mistletoe and a big ball, and all the rest of it."

(*To be continued.*)

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THE MOTH AND THE STAR.

I SAW her first in the Old Salon in Paris. She was standing before Paul Langdon's picture, "The Moth and the Star," which at that time was creating a sensation in the artistic world.

It was early—too early for the gay, laughing throng that would an hour or two later fill these rooms, criticising, admiring, rejecting. At this time in the morning one expected only to see artists scattered sparsely here and there, and they were too absorbed in contemplation and study of the feast before them to waste idle words with one another. It was, therefore, with a feeling of curiosity that I scrutinised the girl standing before "The Moth and the Star." That she deeply loved and reverenced art could be seen by her air of rapt devotion her utter unconsciousness of her surroundings. Something within me said she was not an artist herself, though she might and must have had the artistic instinct.

Perhaps it was the sight of a maid in attendance, standing respectfully near the entrance-door, that precluded any such thought, for the women artists never hesitated to come to any of the exhibitions unattended—one saw them everywhere alone.

The picture which I could see made so deep an impression upon the girl before me, represented a solitary vestal virgin in white flowing Grecian costume, which was adorned at the throat by a single jewelled star; even on the canvas it shone with the lustre of a real gem.

She was engaged in lighting the tapers on the altar of an old church; two are already burning—when she is surprised by the appearance of a dashing young courtier, dressed in the magnificence of a knight of past ages.

That he breaks into a passionate avowal of love can be read in the expressive portrayal of his countenance, but there is no answering sympathy in the virgin's beautiful face—only calm wonder and dismay. The exquisite carved work of the church's interior—the solemn gloom of the subdued light—form a fitting background for these two figures, and I, as an artist, am free to confess that it was worthy in almost every respect the admiration it excited from all Paris. There was something wonderfully fascinating in the grace of the maiden's unconscious pose—in the strong man's passionate appeal—and in every detail of colour and form. I have seen people gaze at this picture and wander away to others, only to come back to it again and again as though drawn by some unseen force.

The woman, or rather girl, who at present was the sole devotee before this shrine, was herself a study for an artist. Taller than the average height of woman, she was slender and lithe, though perfectly rounded in form; every turn of the head was queenly, and her skin fair, and as delicately tinted as the first flush of Aurora stepping out of the realms of dew-kissed night. The crown of all was her hair, a deep, rich gold-brown, with just the faintest suspicion of a crinkle; this was worn, not after the disfiguring English fashion nor the exaggerated knot of American women, but simply in a soft, graceful coil lying close to the head. I thought I had never seen anything more lovely or effective, and a great desire seized me to paint her.

She must have stood fully fifteen minutes almost motionless before me, but I was so absorbed in studying her that sense of time was forgotten. At length, however, she turned; a quick, ecstatic sigh escaped her parted lips, for one fleeting moment her eyes met mine, and then she was gone, followed at a short distance by the maid at the door.

I drew a long breath; all my artistic sensibilities were on the alert. Sitting down on the nearest chair, I drew my note-book out and tried to sketch her from memory, just in profile as I had seen her standing; the result was unsatisfactory, and I put it back in my pocket dissatisfied. People were already beginning to throng into the rooms; the rustle of satin gowns swept to and fro over the polished floor; mingled perfumes made the air heavy, and before the picture she had admired were grouped half-a-dozen women of fashion whose extravagant exclamations fell incongruously on my ears.

How different women are: Some cannot admire without voluble verbal attestation; others say nothing, because the appreciation of the soul cannot be expressed by mere words—their emotion is of the silent kind, which touches an artist most deeply

I rose and went out, and after walking aimlessly for a half hour or so, proceeded to my rooms in the Rue Montmartre. As I was about to mount the stairs which led to my apartments, a newsboy rushed over with the *Figaro*. Lighting a cigarette, I threw myself on a couch near the window and proceeded to read the news.

The absorbing topic of interest I perceived to be the announcement of the betrothal of a certain Princess Marie Louise Dolores Aimée de Vandois to the notorious Russian Count Vlagmasdi, who was closely allied to the house of Romanoff. I do not know why I waded through three columns of this, for I cared not whether the prospective bride was gifted with the charms of Venus and Minerva combined, or that she was descended from one of the most ancient families of France; neither did the Count's accomplishments and praises interest me, for I knew him to be one of the fastest men of gay Paris—and delighting in the fact. Truly a fitting match for a beautiful and innocent girl; I turned away in disgust.

My reflections were here interrupted by the entrance of two artist friends, Jean Doubet and Jules Busoni. "*Ma foi!*" said the former, "what are you doing up here on a day like this? Throw away the newspaper and come with us out to Passy."

"Yes," urged Busoni, "I can't imagine any one reading the paper on a day fit for the gods; besides, there's nothing but the fair Princess in any paper to be had—Vlagmasdi is a lucky dog—a man to be envied, ah!"

"He has it badly," laughed Doubet good-naturedly. "Fortunately she's a little too far above his reach or we'd lose him from our ranks in the twinkling of an eye."

"That you would, indeed," assented the would-be

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lover with such earnestness that both Jean and I burst into laughter.

It was three days later before I again had an opportunity of visiting the Salon, as on returning from Passy I found a telegram from a friend in Marseilles desiring me to meet him there at once. I must confess to a strong reluctance to leaving Paris just then, but it was for my own interest to go, as this friend had secured a buyer for one of my pictures, and my presence was necessary to complete the bargain.

The morning after my return found me again in the Old Salon. Need I explain that my earnestness to behold my devout adorer of "The Moth and the Star" was the sole object of my visit! I was doomed, however, to disappointment. In vain did my eyes travel over the vast rooms—she was not there. I sat down in front of the picture, feeling a little surprised at the great chagrin which surged through me; still I waited, half expectant, until twelve o'clock, and then went down to the Palais-Royal to breakfast. I began to fear I should never see her again, and the more such a contingency presented itself, the more determined I was to find her—to see her again, if only once. So the following morning I was again at my old station, and within five minutes after I had entered, she came. I felt repaid a hundredfold for my pains, she was such a goodly sight to artistic eyes.

I gazed at her in her radiant loveliness—furtively, delightedly. This time she bestowed passing interest on a dozen or more pictures, but came back and seated herself before Paul Langdon's. At last a sudden irresistible impulse seized me to hear her speak. I advanced slowly towards her and addressed her in English: "Madame, may I ask, as an artist, your opinion of the picture before you—pardon me my presumption, but I would like to know how an outsider is impressed by it."

She turned her eyes to me, and though she replied in excellent English, there was a very charming French inflection in her words.

"I am flattered, monsieur, that you, being an artist, should wish for my humble opinion on the lovely picture before us. I cannot say more in its praise than that it is perfect."

The French maid in the distance was eyeing us a little curiously, but I was too delighted at having *her* speak to me to object to anything so trivial as that.

"Ah," I said, "you think it is perfect—this indeed is delightful praise, and I would that its creator himself might hear, but despite my boundless admiration for the picture there is something wanting in it to me."

"Wanting!" she echoed, in surprise. "I do not understand you. What is it, monsieur?"

"Well," I replied, a trifle embarrassed under her searching, perplexed gaze, "that woman's face wants a soul, she is unmoved by the adoring love offered her; having felt the divine motion of love, she could not stand there unmoved, unpitingly, unsympathetic, merely disturbed by the inability to perform her duty."

"But don't you think, monsieur," asked the clear voice beside me eagerly, "that she, as a vestal virgin, might never have known—never have felt this divine emotion of which you speak?"

"What woman, be she vestal virgin or the woman of fashion, has lived a score of years on this tumultuous planet of ours and can own the flame of Love's passion has never burnt her soul?" I questioned incredulously. Then it occurred to me—could my beautiful companion be speaking of herself—was it possible that love was an abstract to her? Though unbelieving, the words rose involuntarily to my lips: "Have you never loved?" I asked abruptly.

A sudden carmine dyed the exquisite oval of her cheek, her eyes grew dark a moment, and then she said in a low voice: "No," and I felt she had spoken the truth. A silence fell between us, and in that silence the white-robed vestal virgin in the picture shone out as never before; she was no longer an unknown myth of some past age, but symbolized an ideal type—that of the woman beside me.

It was her voice that broke the stillness. "I would rather have her as she is," she said musingly. "Love in her case would only mean sadness."

"And yet," I said impressively, "it comes to all; wanted or unwanted, the chaste star shall tremble into light; it is not only the moth whose wings are burnt, for in that awakening, perhaps, the star shall be consumed in its own flame."

"I do not like to think of such things," said my companion, restlessly plucking the petals of a crimson rose to pieces. "You shall not exterminate my star in so ungracious a fashion; the painter has interpreted better; it is well she has never known love."

I bowed and was about to reply, when there was a stir at the other end of the vast room, and someone whispered the ex-Empress Eugénie was about to enter. My companion grew very pale. "Adieu, monsieur," she said hurriedly; "I must go."

"But the Empress is coming," I began. "Surely you would like to see her?"

She appeared disturbed. "No," she replied; "I have engagements; I must go," and she passed on, leaving me wondering and half inclined to believe I was dreaming. Most puzzling of all, why should she wish to hurry away just because the ex-Empress was coming? Women were generally delighted to catch a glimpse of her.

The days somehow passed very rapidly about this time, and I continued to haunt the Salon assiduously. Sometimes I saw her, but more often not; she was always attended by her solemn-looking maid, and was invariably gracious, though I began to notice the radiancy which attracted me so much at first had almost vanished.

There was a deep thoughtfulness in her eyes, in the repose of the exquisite mouth. She told me once in our brief conversations that Paul Langdon the artist was an old friend of her family's, and that years ago he had loved, unrequited, her elder sister, who had been dead now nearly ten years.

"Ah," I said, "that probably explains his picture of 'The Moth and the Star.'"

"Yes," she answered, half sadly; "you see his own experience disguised; the face and form of this vestal virgin before us are those of my sweet dead sister. Do you wonder now, monsieur, why I come here so often?"

Her voice was mournfully reflective, as though she were travelling over long-past scenes. It was on this day that I asked her to sit to me for her portrait; she hesitated and demurred at first, but I urged her so strenuously that she finally consented to give me half-a-dozen sittings if that would content me, and then she gave me one of her dazzling smiles, and I thought I was the most fortunate man in the world. Promptly at ten she came the first morning—oh, the delight of having her sit so near me, bewildering my eyes with her loveliness, beautiful beyond the dream of man, in a gown of rich, shimmering white satin that showed her fairness to perfection. The time being so limited, I was forced to strain every nerve to accomplish a certain amount of work at each sitting.

Her grim maid, who sat near the door, I soon learnt

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could understand no English, and this consoled me in some measure for her presence. My studio, after *she* left, seemed illumined with her personality until she came again—it was joy simply to live.

On the morning of the fifth sitting, just as she was preparing to go, conversation turned in some unaccountable manner to the coming marriage of the Princess Marie de Vandois. I cannot remember which introduced the subject, but my sentiments were unvarnished and plain. "I would rather my sister were lying dead than married to the Count Vlagmasdi," I said quietly.

"Why?" she asked with spirit; "he is handsome, rich, and fascinating—what more would you have?"

"I would have him hold women a little higher than the lightest thing God ever created," I replied with some heat; surely everyone in Paris knew the Count's reputation. I could not refrain from quoting to her a few lines of Coventry Patmore's that rose in my mind:

"Ah, wasteful woman, she that may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
How has she cheapen'd paradise;
How given for nought her priceless gift,
How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine,
Which spent with due, respective thrift,
Had made brutes men and men divine!"

She was standing erect, drawing on her glove; the smile had died from her lips, and I saw tears standing in her beautiful eyes. In some way I felt I had hurt her, and in a moment my long pent-up passion burst forth. Time, place, maid—all were forgotten, I only knew that I loved. Twice she tried to interrupt me, but I would not—she must hear how she had come to be the light of my life itself, that I lived but on her smiles from one day to another.

She stood motionless when I had finished, her eyes dark with pain, her lips white and tremulous. "*Mon Dieu!*" she murmured; "what have I done—I would have been your friend. Forget me, I am not worthy of your love." Her voice broke into something like a sob. I looked up and she had vanished—a mist swam before my eyes.

The next thing I remember was walking out to the Bois, striding madly, feverishly on, I knew not whither. Late in the afternoon, retracing my steps back towards the Champs-Elysees, I encountered Jules Busoni. His gay pleasantries and jocular remarks jarred on my nerves, and it was with difficulty I could answer him civilly; he took the hint, however, and soon left me.

The Bois was black with a continuous stream of carriages. It seemed as though all the beauty and fashion of Paris had turned out to bask in the warm June sunshine. Suddenly my eyes were riveted on an approaching carriage. Were my senses suddenly leaving me, or did I really behold *her* sitting there in regal state beside the Count Vlagmasdi? No; it was true; she was looking in my direction, and, with one of her dazzling smiles, bowed in recognition; the Count, too, glanced half carelessly round—and they had passed. A terrible fear possessed me. I grasped a passing boy by the arm.

"Who is that lady riding there with the Count Vlagmasdi?" I demanded hoarsely.

"*La belle Princesse Marie de Vandois; la fiancée de Monsieur le Compte*," replied the boy, shaking himself free from my tight hold.

I fell back stunned; a dozen little things rose up in my mind to confirm his statement. How blind I had been, how wilfully! It was indeed a case of the moth and the star. I laughed bitterly. No wonder she did not wish to see the ex-Empress Eugénie that day in the old Salon; her mother was one of the Empress' dearest friends. Fool that I was not to have seen it all, I groaned in spirit.

At any cost I would quit Paris. I would not witness her triumph, I would not stay to hear the very street resound with her approaching nuptials. Paris had suddenly grown hateful to me. Yet I found it vain to strive to forget in the whirl of London season. Like a beautiful vision of unrest, *her* face floated ever before my eyes, but its joyousness mocked me. My remembrance of England must always be a painful one, for 'twas there I spent the most bitter three weeks of my life.

At last I could stand it no longer. I had thought to drown pain by fleeing from the cause, but it seemed only to increase with the distance from her, and I determined on the very eve of her wedding to return to Paris, if only for one more glance at her. From the Gare du Nord I went straight to my rooms in the Rue Montmartre. It was raining in torrents, and I found that in the suddenness of my flight to England I had left the east window of my studio open. Alas, what a sight met my eyes! The easel on which her unfinished picture stood had blown over and the portrait lay face downward on the floor. I raised it tenderly, it was blurred almost past recognition and soaked through with rain. A rap sounded at the door, and the *concierge* entered, bringing me a batch of letters that had accumulated in my absence. There were two lying on top which arrested my attention; the writing, in a woman's fine hand, was unknown to me. Was it possible she might have written? I tore open the first and glanced at the signature. It was dated over two weeks back and was signed with *her* name—"Marie de Vandois."

There was no beginning.

"You told me once," it ran, "that some day the soul of every woman awakens. Life until I knew you was simply a joyous passing to and fro—a song that had no minor strain—endless—beautiful! Then I knew you! It was you who taught me the supreme value of a woman's soul and I would have given for nought the priceless gift. I thought to forget you—strove to put you out of my life The power to do so is beyond me. If you love me as you said three days ago, come to me—save me from a worse fate than death. Until then I wait, counting the hours.—Marie de Vandois."

The world suddenly grew radiant again. Oh God, was it too late? I tore open the second note with feverish haste; what must she think of my silence! It was dated this morning, and read: "I ask not why you have not come, it is but just that you should despise me, but for the love you once bore me, pray for me—pray for my soul. When the clock in St. Dunstan's strikes eight tonight, I shall be *his* wife. Do you remember the day you told me that when the star awoke there was danger of being consumed in its own fire? I was incredulous, yet that fate has o'ertaken me. The moth singed his wings, but pity the star that has been burnt out by its own flame."

It ended abruptly. My star—mine—my own! even at the eleventh hour I would save her! In my frenzy and exhultation. I groped blindly about for my hat. The candle flickered and went out. The rain poured in through the open window (I had forgotten to close it), and through the blackness and desolation sounded the death-knell to my hopes—the clock in St. Dunstan's struck eight.

Blanche Schreiner.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

III.—THE MESMERIST'S DAUGHTER.

(Concluded from last week.)

"Surely you are Dr. Favel whom we are expecting?" she said, cordially; and, when I bowed, she inquired how I had managed to come so far out of my way.

"They must have misdirected you at the station," she said in her musical voice; and I confessed candidly to my presumptuous faith in my own powers of local discovery.

"You must trust to it no longer," she said, with a smile as sweet as her voice; "but accept my guidance, or you will inevitably be lost before you reach the château."

I thanked her, and called her naturally, "My lady." I never doubted that Lord Aldwyn had made her his wife. But as soon as the name was out of my mouth, I saw by the colour which flashed to my companion's face that I had made a mistake.

"You must not call me that," she said with a little laugh; "I am only Miss Vaudary."

I was startled, and murmured an apology awkwardly. I looked forward to seeing my host, and knowing exactly how the case stood.

When I arrived at the house, however, under Miss Vaudary's pilotage, I found that the Marquis was absent, while the old Marchioness, his mother, was confined to her room, as my guide had already informed me. I was shown to my own chambers in the east wing of the fine old mansion, where Lord Aldwyn called upon me as soon as he got in. He seemed extremely glad to see me—so much so that I began to fear that his mother's health was worse than his letter had led me to expect.

I inquired anxiously whether such was the case, and discovered at once from the careless manner in which the Marquis replied, that it was not.

He seemed extremely glad to see me.

"She has been pretty much the same for months now, but I thought she was perhaps getting a little weaker, under the care of her doctor here. Possibly you can do something for her, although there is little that can be done, I know, in cases like hers, where the heart is at fault."

I was a little surprised to hear this, after travelling so far and with some haste, expressly on the Marchioness's behalf.

Possibly I made my surprise evident, for the Marquis seated himself by my side, and told me in a confidential undertone the true reason why he was so anxious for my presence.

"It is not often that I am in want of other men's advice or sympathy," he said; "but I am just now. You promised, you remember, to assist me once more in relation to my curious love-story, if I found assistance to be necessary."

"Certainly," I said, wondering what was coming.

"It is scarcely as a doctor or as a student of mesmerism that I wish to consult you this time," he went on, "but rather as a man whose judgment I know is sound, and whose sympathy can be relied on. You are the only man, too, except Canise, who knows the early part of the history; and I shrink from taking more into my confidence, especially now that it promises to end so unhappily for me."

"Indeed!" I said in some surprise. "I should have thought from Miss Vaudary's presence at the château, that an unhappy termination to the affair was impossible."

My companion only shook his head.

"You will recollect that at our last meeting at the Professor's," he went on, "I surprised you by expressing my intention to avail myself of that wicked man's influence over his daughter, to marry her while under the effect of his mesmerism. I was led to that determination by two considerations; the chief one, you will do me the justice to believe, was the fear that a refusal on my part to go on with the case would merely lead to the substitution of another bridegroom or protector. The old man, I could see, had had his appetite whetted both for personal profit and for professional achievement; and if I withdrew, it was almost certain that some rich man, probably less scrupulous and more brutal than myself, would take my place.

"That was the chief consideration. Then, again, I made no pretence of denying my love for the old charlaton's daughter. I hoped that, if I removed her from her father's influence into my own care I should in time manage to awaken in her heart some love for me. I believed, you see, that Paul Terry was dead."

"Paul Terry—the man whose personal attractiveness for Miss Vaudary you borrowed? Surely you did not accept the Professor's word as sufficient authority for the fact of the man's death?"

The Marquis shook his head.

"Certainly not. I wrote to the address in Paris, which, you may remember, appeared on the young man's

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card. I received a reply, assuring me that the young artist had indeed died as the Professor stated."

"Ah, that is well," I said, with a sigh of relief. "I was very much afraid you were going to say that this Paul Terry was still living."

The Marquis answered quickly:

"He *is* still living. I presume that the *concierge* at his lodgings had been bought over by Vaudary before my letter reached him."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"And has he met Miss Vaudary?"

The Marquis's answer startled me a little.

"He has met the lady who was Miss Vaudary, but who is now my wife."

"Your wife!" I could not help exclaiming. "She assured me that she was unmarried."

It was Aldwyn's turn to be startled.

"You have met her and asked her the question?" he inquired excitedly.

And I related to him all that had happened. As I did so his look of anxiety gradually disappeared, and he asked me, when I had done, the most minute questions as to the lady's appearance and manner when she informed me that she was not "My lady."

"Thank you," he said at last, when he had made me tell him every conceivable detail of the scene in the lane. "Perhaps I had better continue my story now, then I shall be able to ask your advice in the horrible situation in which I find myself. Possibly my life will depend upon it."

I needed nothing to quicken my interest, and assured my companion of the fact.

"Well, to begin with," he went on, "I married Miss Violet Vaudary just a week after our visit to the Professor, in the house which he still retained at Paris."

"While the bride was under the influence of mesmerism?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Under the name of Paul Terry?"

"Yes."

"Pardon me," I said. "Does that fact make the marriage invalid?"

The Marquis shook his head.

"I am afraid not. If it did, the fact would provide an easy way out of my difficulty—a way which would render necessary the sacrifice only of my own happiness. But a false name given by one of the parties to a marriage does not invalidate the tie, unless the other party is aware of its falseness. To proceed, however. Immediately after the ceremony we started by train for Dildac, where I had lately bought the château, and where my dear mother, who knew the whole story, had promised to take care of my wife.

"The beginning of that journey was a honeymoon; for Violet, still under the influence of her father's will, believed herself travelling with the man of her heart. Before long, however, she fell asleep with her head resting on my shoulder. The sleep was deep and heavy. You are aware, no doubt——"

"That the sleep which follows mesmerism is akin to a stupor. Yes. Pray go on."

"During that sleep I took pains to change her position so that she no longer rested upon me, and to remove the wedding-ring from her finger. Of course, we were alone in the compartment. Luckily we had not to change—Dildac, as you found, is on the main line to Lyons—and my newly-made wife did not wake until we were within a few miles of our destination.

"As I anticipated, she no longer viewed me with affection, but was startled to find herself travelling in the express without having the least idea whither she was going. In a few moments I looked up from my paper, which I had been pretending to read at the other end of the compartment, and addressed her with distant and respectful courtesy. My story was all prepared, of course, beforehand.

"Her father—of whom, poor girl, it was easy for her to believe any evil—had plotted to marry her, against her will, to a stranger, while she was in a state of mesmerism. I had been begged by a friend of hers, whose name I was able to give, to rescue her, and place her out of her father's power. We were on our way to a place of refuge, where she would be safe in the care of my mother. I had the story ready, in its most convincing

To remove the wedding-ring from her finger.

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form, and Violet listened, in a sort of startled fear, from beginning to end. I am afraid she did not believe me, and I am sure that nothing would have persuaded her, friendless and quite lost as she was, to accompany me to the château, had not my dear mother met us at the station.

"She achieved everything. You have not yet seen my mother, I believe; when you do, you will understand how she won my wife's confidence in a few minutes. Their friendship is beautiful, and I am inclined to be jealous of the affection of both.

"My wife took up her residence with us quite willingly, and has remained since, without question. She is too conscious of her father's villainies to wonder at my story. She has no curiosity, apparently, as to its details. She is happy to enjoy our friendship without inquiry, although I have had to invent a distant relationship between us, to account somewhat for our care of her welfare.

"I thought it best to keep myself and my own part in the affair as much as possible in the background, at first. I made a point, therefore, of making trips to various parts of France, and also to London, and of visiting only occasionally at the château.

"During those visits, I was beginning to think that my wife—whom we still call by her maiden name, and has not the slightest idea that she is my wife—that Violet was beginning to extend to me, in a slight measure, the affection with which she certainly regarded my mother. I decided to 'hasten slowly'—it is the motto of our house. Then came the death of her father and with it a revelation, which destroyed my peace.

"Paul Terry was not dead. Vaudary wrote me a letter on his deathbed, to inform me of the fact—'as a duty he owed me,' he said. The artist's death was a fiction, he confessed, invented solely by himself, to obtain for his daughter a more aristocratic alliance than Terry could offer. Inclosed was the young man's photograph, to enable me, the Professor said, to be on my guard, and prevent my wife ever meeting him."

"But they have met?" I asked.

"Yes; a week ago. He came here sketching, of all places in the world."

"And your—the lady retains her affection for him?"

"I have no doubt of it."

CHAPTER III.

"Now, I want your advice as to what I can do," said the Marquis. "It may seem a little thing to drag you over from England for, when the whole thing is so clear; but if you knew how I have worried my poor brain, thinking the thing over and over, until my mind is sick and dizzy, you would understand how necessary it is for me to have somebody to talk it over with. Although I have had but two conversations with you, I can think of nobody with whom I would rather do so than yourself."

I bowed and smiled, really pleased by the confidence which he had in me.

"I see your difficulty," I said. "If you keep secret any longer the fact of your marriage, you stand the risk of this Paul Terry paying addresses to your wife, under the impression that she is still 'Miss Vaudary.' If, on the other hand, you announce the fact of your marriage, you lose the chance of gradually winning your wife's affection while she considers herself unbound."

The Marquis interrupted me with an exclamation of irritation.

"Great Heaven! no," he said. "You mistake me. What troubles me is the thought that I have raised an insuperable barrier between the woman I love—and happiness. Do you think I am considering my own happiness? Why! man, I would willingly die to-morrow, knowing that my death would unravel the web I have woven round poor Violet's life. The questions are these: Is there a way of setting her free? Is Paul Terry as devoted to her as she is to him, or is he only trifling with her love? The latter I want you to find out. As to the possibility of annulling the marriage, I should like your opinion. If there is no other way, and the young artist loves her, and is worthy of her love, I shall remove my embarrassing presence with the aid of a revolver. But for my dear mother's sake, I hope that course will be unnecessary."

"You must not think of it," I said gravely. But the Marquis took no heed of my words.

I tried then to persuade him that the marriage could be annulled in a court of law. "If the judges accept the fact of Miss Vaudary's mesmerism," I said, "they will certainly decide against the marriage, which, I believe, has not been consummated."

"Of course not," said the Marquis irritably. "But no judge will accept the fact that my wife was mesmerised and unconscious of her actions."

"Then she must have been aware, in their opinion," I said, priding myself on my logic, "that you were marrying her under a false name, since her father, no doubt, introduced you on the first occasion by your true name."

"It is uncertain whether he did so," said the Marquis; and the melancholy with which he said it almost made me laugh in spite of myself. It seemed so grimly humorous for a man to be trying with might and main to prove that no tie held to him the woman he loved.

I promised, finally, to cultivate the acquaintance of Paul Terry, with a view to finding out the state of his feelings with regard to Violet, and also his worthiness to her hand.

"I shall go away," said the Marquis. "It is impossible for me to stay here and see her every day, knowing that I shall never be able now to win her heart. It would drive me mad. I know I can depend upon you to find out everything, and let me know the result. I shall start for Paris this evening."

"Tell me, before we part," I said, "what makes you so sure that the lady cares for this painter?"

"Why, it stands to reason," said the marquis, "when she married the man she believed to be him. However, that is nothing. I judge entirely from her manner. Before I knew that he was in Dildac, I knew she had seen him, from the joyousness of her manner. Afterwards her air has become sad and melancholy. It breaks my heart to see her and to know that I am the one barrier which she evidently unconsciously feels existing between herself and the man of her choice."

"I hope you are mistaken," I said. "At any rate I shall soon be able to see the state of her feelings, and his, I trust, if I get a chance of seeing them together."

"You will have the chance before long," said the Marquis, "as Paul Terry is often at the château."

"What!" I exclaimed, aghast. "You have invited him here? You throw them together?"

"Certainly. I can always drop out with the aid of a pistol shot if the position becomes too complicated."

I looked hard at his honest, matter-of-fact face, and could not restrain myself from taking his hand.

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"Most men would call you mad, my lord," I said candidly; "I think you a hero."

The marquis shrugged his shoulders.

"I am neither," he said quietly. "I am simply in love. To possess my wife at the cost of her happiness, and without possessing her heart, would be as painful as life under any circumstances without her presence. Can I trust you to act for me as I have stated? I should like you to give my mother what attention you can at the same time. Probably I shall not see you again before I leave for Paris, so here is my address—and good-bye."

Lord Aldwyn handed me a card with the name of a large hotel in Paris, and shook hands with me. It was, as he said, the last time I saw him before he left the château.

Next morning I visited my patient, the old Marchioness, a dear old lady, who charmed me. I was pleased to find that her illness was due less to her heart than to her liver, and eventually her health considerably improved. This is by the way, however, and does not concern my story.

I was anxious to see how she regarded the girl of her son's choice, and must confess that I was a little surprised to find her speak enthusiastically in her favour.

"My poor boy has told you his story, I believe," she said. "Oh, I do trust that you will be able to find out that there is some hope left for him — some loophole of escape from the terrible state of affairs which he believes to exist. You will give him what encouragement you can, won't you, Dr. Favel?"

There were tears in the old lady's eyes as she placed her hand pleadingly on my arm, and I hastened to assure her that all my sympathies were excited for her son, the Marquis, and that nothing in the world would give me greater pleasure than to find his fears unfounded.

Walked towards me with her arm in his.

The old lady went on speaking of Violet.

"I will confess," she said, that I was a little prejudiced when Cyril told me about his love; but, of course, I knew that he alone had the right to choose whom he should marry. And my prejudices vanished almost as soon as I saw dear Violet. She is indeed the woman of all others I would have chosen to make Cyril happy. I feel, somehow, as though you would find out that he need not lose her."

It seemed to me that everybody was expecting a great deal from me; and, as far as I could see, there was not very much for me to do. The first thing, of course, was to find out, if possible, the true state of the lady's feelings towards Paul Terry, who was staying, I understood, in a picturesque little tavern near the château gates.

I seized the opportunity next morning, when the Professor's daughter offered to show me over the grounds, of accepting promptly and turning the conversation round to the young artist, whom I regret to state, I spoke of as an acquaintance of mine.

The pious fraud availed nothing. Madame turned to me quickly and, with flashing eyes, startled me with a sudden thrust.

"You have an object in speaking to me of Monsieur Terry?" she said, looking straight into my face—so straight that I could not deny the truth of her assertion.

"Yes, Miss Vaudary," I said instead.

"It is useless, I suppose," she went on, "inquiring what that object is?"

I had to confess to her that it was useless.

There was silence then for a few minutes, while we walked onward side by side through the beautiful English-like park which surrounded the château. Then my companion startled me once more by asking, as if the question was led up to by a train of thought:

"Can you tell me, Dr. Favel, if a marriage would be binding supposing the bride entered into it unconsciously?"

"Unconsciously?" I repeated.

"In a stupor — or under the influence of mesmerism, say?"

"I think it would be binding," I said honestly. For the question of a false name was not concerned in her question.

"You have heard of such a marriage?" she said quickly, making me regret the celerity with which I had replied; and I changed the conversation determinedly as soon as I had given the inevitable affirmative.

By some means or other my lady had arrived very near to the truth, I thought; and it occurred to me that Miss Vaudary was prospering a good deal more with her questioning than I with mine. I felt quite ashamed of my impotence to assist my host as he expected me to do. For though Miss Vaudary had satisfied herself on some points by my answers, I had gained nothing at all from hers.

I was quite relieved when the walk was ended and I was back in my own rooms, away from the young lady's clear-reading eyes. I sincerely hoped, though, that the old Marchioness would not want to see me and question me about my success. The Marquis, I knew well enough, would be expecting a letter on the subject by the next morning's post; but I had no news to give him, and

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therefore did not write. After Miss Vaudary's thrust I had decided not to seek Terry out immediately, for fear of further awakening her suspicious curiosity.

After the post had gone that night, however, I felt bound to telegraph to Aldwyn. And this was the message I sent:

"V. V. has left the château; it is believed with P. T."

I trust that the Postmaster at Telliers, our nearest telegraph office, did not recognise in the message the initials of Violet Vaudary and Paul Terry.

This is how the message came to be sent. After spending all the day in my room, I was summoned by the Marchioness at eight, and found her in considerable alarm, Miss Vaudary had not been seen since the morning. Subsequent inquiries showed that she had taken a ticket for Paris, and travelled by the noon train. Also, that she had received a letter by post some little while before starting. On hearing which I hastened to the tavern in the village, and inquired for Paul Terry, only to be told that he, too, had left by the same train for the same destination as the Marquis's wife.

To say that the news filled me with consternation, is is to speak too mildly. To think that after Lord Aldwyn had reposed such trust in me, and had counted upon me so confidently to give the best turn to affairs that was possible—that I had allowed the worst to happen, and most probably hastened the horrible *dénouement*. All this filled me with a shame that was scarcely bearable.

Instead of assisting the noble-hearted Marquis to arrange matters in the best manner, I had allowed the woman, for whose happiness he cared so much, to guess from my words and manner what she had evidently only suspected before, that she was legally married to my friend, and had thus driven her to bring shame upon herself and him by an elopement with the man she loved. I upbraided myself bitterly, and dared not face the thought of seeing the man who trusted me, and confessing to him how I had bungled everything.

The more I thought of it, the worse the ordeal appeared to me, and by the evening of the next day I had resolved not to face it. I had given my patient a prescription and certain rules of diet, which I considered would do wonders for her; and towards evening I packed up my baggage, and leaving a letter for the Marquis to have when he returned to the château, set out for the station.

I decided not to return to Paris, for several reasons, one of which was the chance of meeting Lord Aldwyn Instead, I purposed going down to the Rivi-ra, for a short visit. I had to wait, therefore, for the train which passed through Dildac on its way from Paris to Lyons, I regretted the fact since it suggested the chance of my meeting the Marquis if he returned from Paris that day. We had received no word from him, and did not know when to expect his arrival.

I hung back nervously as the train steamed in, and eagerly looked for the exit of passengers from the train. The Marquis had come after all; for I saw him open the door of a compartment and step on the platform.

Judge of my surprise, however, when he helped from the train—his wife, and walked towards me with her arm in his. When I saw that both looked radiantly happy, my surprise became so great that I lost my train and forfeited my ticket—to hear Lord Aldwyn's explanation.

The full explanation, however, I did not learn till after our arrival at the château, when the Marquis tapped at the door of my room, as he had done on the night of my arrival, and came in to set my mind at rest.

"Since you have heard so much of my love-story, of course you must hear the rest," he said, "although it seems almost too sacred to speak of now."

I had a hard struggle with my conscience before I could make the necessary reply, which, luckily for my curiosity, Lord Aldwyn ignored.

"Thanks to your telegram, I met my wife on her arrival at Paris," he said. "She was not aware that Paul Terry was in the train. She would have been even more unhappy had she known it, for it was to avoid Paul Terry that she left Dildac. From the first my poor little wife—who I shall marry once more in my own name, as soon as it can be done—had some latent suspicion that when I took her away from her father's guardianship he had already compelled her unconsciously to go through some form of marriage. Later she began to suspect that it was with me, and was well content, for, thank Heaven! she had learned to love me at Dildac. When she met Terry he assured her for a fact that she was married, having heard it from her father. He was ignorant however, of the bridegroom's name, and finding Violet equally ignorant, amused himself by hinting after awhile that it was himself. My unfortunate encouragement of the artist made her more steady to believe him, as did also your show of interest in him.

"Meanwhile my poor wife had written to a friend she remembered in Paris, begging her to make inquiries among the marriage-records there; and, when the friend discovered the mention of Violet's marriage to a Paul Terry—whose name, you remember, I assumed under the belief that the man was dead—of course my poor little wife had no longer doubt on the subject. Since her heart was given to me, the thought of belonging to another was terrible to her. You understand everything now?"

"Yes," I said, somewhat startled. "Her affection for Terry, in the first place, was a myth, of course?"

"Not altogether; she was prepossessed in his favour at their one interview; so much so that she did not care to make my acquaintance afterwards. But all the rest—the falling in love, the engagement, the marriage—belong to her mesmerised existence, and have no relation whatever to her real life and feelings."

Such was the Marquis's explanation; and I suppose it is all I need tell of the strangest love-story which ever came under my observation, except that a week later Dildac was *en fête* to celebrate the prettiest wedding I have ever seen.

I sometimes wonder what would happen if the Marchioness of Aldwyn were mesmerised once more; but I think I can trust the noble Lord, her husband, not to allow the experiment to be made.

HERBERT FLOWERDEW.

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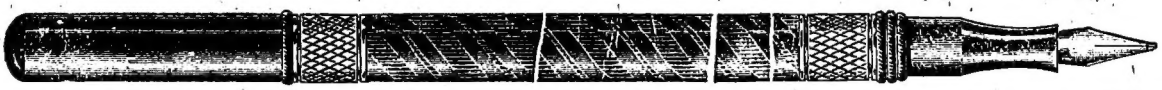

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Answers to Correspondents.

IF any readers would care to collect any money for the FRESH AIR FUND I shall be pleased to forward any number of printed forms to facilitate their work. It is the best possible means of swelling the F.A.F., for where one person cannot himself give a substantial sum he will find it a comparatively easy task, and certainly a pleasant one, to induce his friends and relations to give a little. A post-card addressed to the secretary of the FRESH AIR FUND, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., will bring along the number required.

SMOKER.—The most valuable pipe in the world is the property of the Shah of Persia. It is set with precious stones, and is worth £80,000. The "Vesuvian" column in *Pearson's Weekly* was discontinued some time ago.

SYBIL.—Yes, it is quite possible to judge character by the eyes to a certain extent, although the mouth is a much better indicator of a person's disposition.

S. B. A.—Ireland was first called "The Emerald Isle" in a poem written by a Dr. Drennan in the latter half of the last century.

C. G.—Try an ostrich egg at your next party, for a change. Ten people can make a meal off one, and it takes an hour to boil.

R. E. W.—Half-farthings were coined in the year 1843, but not being of much use they were soon withdrawn from circulation.

T. T.—Ordinary dreams, by which I mean the dreams of healthy people, which generally occur a few minutes before waking, are perfectly harmless. Dreams, however, which are the result of mental anxiety or over brainwork are decidedly injurious. No, the letter was not received.

V. N.—Audiences are forbidden to applaud in Russian theatres.

TEETOTALER.—The quality of the various kinds of tea depends almost entirely upon the season of the year when the leaves are picked, the best tea being that made from the youngest leaves.

CLERK.—Certainly forty words a minute is very good speed for writing in longhand. The majority of people do not write faster than twenty-five words a minute.

VIOLET.—Yes, the old story of "The Mistletoe Bough" is really founded on fact. The sad event occurred in the family of the Hawkesburys in the year 1689.

F. D.—Your dog has certainly a remarkable appetite. A similar instance came under my notice recently. This time it was a bullock, which evinced a great liking for nails, gun shots, skewers, or any other delicacies of the kind.

F. H. G.—The reason is that the Chinese have a horror of a straight line; to them it is suggestive of death and demons. They employ only curves and zigzags.

H. L. B.—Many thanks for your letter, and the interesting facts it contains about bees. The venom of the bee is considered by some people to be a remedy for cancer, rheumatism, snake-bite, and other ills.

M. M.—You should certainly sleep with your bedroom window open, unless you are exceptionally delicate.

B. A.—The coin of which you speak may be good, in spite of the fact that it does not ring when tested. Gold and silver coins often get slightly cracked, causing them to sound "dead."

H. D.—A detective's salary varies from £3 to £10 a week.

MINNIE.—The rate of growth of the human hair varies. In some instances it has been known to exceed two inches a month.

E. W.—About 4,000,000 tons of potatoes are used annually in France in the manufacture of starch and alcohol.

A CONSTANT READER.—Ants are certainly not the most delightful guests to have in one's house. Try the following method of getting rid of them: Wash the wood-work round their haunts with turpentine and water; strew camphor about, and dust insect powder, or snuff, wherever they appear.

T. R. R.—Bangkok is the capital of Siam, not of Annam. It is a floating city, containing 70,000 houses, each of which floats on a raft of bamboo.

U. R.—No, it is not correct for a man to walk arm in arm with his *fiancée* in the public street, but people in love do not always stop to consider etiquette.

INQUIRER wishes to know which is the best British regiment.——Do you mean physically, or morally, or what? The 17th Lancers and Scots Greys in the cavalry, and Black Watch (42nd Highlanders) in the infantry, have all wonderfully good records.

H. M.—The three holes in the top of a cocoanut are for the purpose of allowing the young tree to issue from the shell when the nut is planted, and are not intended for the purpose of taking out the milk. The poem never appeared in *S.S.*

GINGER.—You should be proud of the colour of your hair, instead of wishing to change it. Auburn hair is fast becoming rare, and in years to come it will probably be quite extinct.

V. C. W.—The Bank of France is much the larger of the two. It does more than four times the amount of business done by the Bank of England.

SUSAN.—You are not the only girl in Britain dissatisfied with the Christian name given you by your parents. It would almost seem better if one could choose one's own name; but as that is impossible, the best thing is to make the best of it.

H. H.—If the skin of a human being were to be dressed and made into leather, it would very closely resemble pig skin.

T. H. W.—The oldest police force, as distinguished from the *gendarmerie*, appears to be our own. The principals engaged in the Tichborne trial and the de Goncourt frauds were far superior to any others in the detective force, past or present.

W. F.—I know of no cure for left-handedness. Constant effort and strength of will may do a lot towards overcoming it.

G. F.—The British Crown is worth nearly £300,000.

R. C.—"Bluenoses" is the nickname given to the inhabitants of Nova Scotia.

E. E. W.—The reason you are asked to write your manuscript on only one side of the paper is not that the editor may use the other side for scribbling, but for the convenience of the printers.

G. C. B.—No, it is very seldom that both sides of a face are exactly alike. The left side has almost invariably a softer outline and more pleasing expression than the right, and you will generally find that it is the left side which is portrayed in a photograph.

W. R.—You might be able to sleep better if your bed were turned towards the north. Many people cannot sleep with their heads to the south, east or west.

F. F.—I believe there is only one plant whose perfume is fatal to life. It is found in the volcanic districts of Java and Sumatra.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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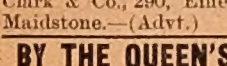

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ROYAL TESTIMONIAL.

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